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Meditations
for Lent



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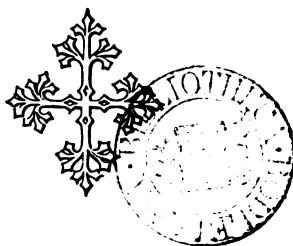




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MEDITATIONS
FOR THE
FORTY DAYS OF LENT.



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PREFATORY NOTICE.

I HAVE read several of the *Meditations for the Forty Days of Lent* contained in this little volume, and feel sure that many others will find their pleasure and profit therein.

RICHARD C. DUBLIN.

PALACE, DUBLIN,
Jan. 24, 1872.

THERE is one omission throughout these short readings which needs a few words of explanation,—the absence of notes of reference to quotations. The only excuse to be offered is, that the *Meditations* were not originally written for publication, and only the very few notes of reference which are given were made at the time, though care was then taken to mark all borrowed words. It would now be all-but impossible to supply this omission; but it may, perhaps, be forgiven in a book which will probably be mostly used (if at all) by the young, and in which many foot-notes might have rather a distracting tendency, since the readings are entirely devotional. Only it may be right to say, that by far the larger number of quotations are from the writings of those “ancient Fathers” of undivided Christendom, to whose authority the English Prayer-book makes frequent appeal. If the words of others besides these have occa-

sionally been used, though not unmarked, yet without special acknowledgement, their indulgence is very earnestly asked, since any attempt to remedy the deficiency, with only memory as guide, would certainly cause many mistakes.

One word more of explanation, though there have been already too many for anything so short and slight as these readings. The best teachers have advised us to use method in meditation,—dividing it, for instance, into “preparation, considerations, affections, resolutions,”—and it may seem almost wrong to offer anything called “Meditations,” in which no such method or divisions are observed; but as they were written at the suggestion of one to whom it was a happiness to owe any duty, they could but be set down in the only way which want of capacity and of training made possible. A more methodical manner is doubtless the best, since it is so much recommended to us, but it will always be difficult (at least to some minds) without the training of early habit. Thought and emotion are so intermingled, they are so all-but simultaneous, that it is difficult to separate them;

“affections” would with some evaporate in the process of dividing them from “considerations.” And indeed feeling can no more be expressed in words, than can perfumes which the sun draws from flowers, though there have been those with love so fervent that they have given expression to it in “words that burn.”

But a want of method in written meditations will the less matter, because it would indeed be a great loss if any one were to allow the use of even the best books to take the place of real meditation; for “according as we neglect meditation, so are our prayers imperfect; meditation being the soul of prayer*.” What may have been real meditation to one can only be devout reading to others; and the most it can do as a help to meditation will be to suggest some line of thought which may be cast into the method already learned, and used with far more of profit than it yielded to the writer. God will give us thoughts and affections if we ask Him, and nothing can take the place of that communion of the soul with Him. We “cannot

* Bp. Jeremy Taylor.

tell how He approaches the soul; but by the life of Christ, by the power of His Spirit, by the beauty of the world, by the holiness of His saints, by the tenderness of friends, He does speak to the soul, and the soul speaks to God, and so rests."

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*Oh ! Thou Who deign'st to sympathize
 With all our frail and fleshly ties,
 Maker, yet Brother dear,
 Forgive the too presumptuous thought,
 If, calming wayward grief, I sought
 To gaze on Thee too near.*

*A Son that never did amiss,
 That never sham'd His Mother's kiss,
 Nor cross'd her fondest prayer :
 E'en from the tree He deign'd to bow
 For her His agonized brow,
 Her, His sole earthly care.*

*Alas ! when those we love are gone,
 Of all sad thoughts, 'tis only one
 Brings bitterness indeed ;
 The thought what poor, cold, heartless aid
 We lent to cheer them while they stayed ;
 This makes the conscience bleed.*

*Lord, by Thy love, and by Thy power,
And by the sorrows of that hour,
Let me not weep too late ;
Help me in anguish meet and true
My thankless words and ways to rue,
Now justly desolate.*

*By Thine own Mother's first caress,
Whom Thou with smiles so sweet didst bless,
'Twas heaven on earth to see ;
Help me, though late, to love aright
Her who has glided from our sight,
To rest (dear Saint) with Thee.*

*Thou knowest if her gentle glance
Look on us, as of old, to enhance
Our evening calm so sweet :
But, Son of Mary, Thou art there ;
O, make us ('tis a mourner's prayer)
For such dear visits meet.*

JOHN KEBLE.

Feb. 5, 1872.

Ash-Wednesday.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.—CANT. iii. 11.

FOR it is written, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee^a.” “Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh^b.” Called to meet Him in the hour of His brief earthly triumph, in a few days the daughters of Jerusalem must go forth to behold Him wearing the thorny crown wherewith His mother, the nation from which He sprang, crowned Him, in the day when He for ever espoused His Bride to Himself. Then He bid them weep, for themselves and for their children. But now He calls to gladness, “not driving chariots, like the rest of the kings, not demanding tributes, not thrusting men off, and leading about guards, but displaying His great meekness even hereby,” even by the lowliness of His one triumph here, the shadow and prefiguring on earth of that triumphal entrance when the everlasting gates

^a Zech. ix. 9.

^b Isa. lxii. 11.

were opened to receive the King of Glory, crowned with the sign of victory.

Is not the lesson for us, for each one, at this time especially, to be ready equally to follow Him in gladness and in sorrow, remembering "that Baptism representeth unto us our profession, which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him?" The daughters of Jerusalem went forth to meet Him in His triumph, and that is not hard to do; or, at least, to seem to do; to thank Him and rejoice in Him during times of bright gladness. Only, perhaps, when we have thought we rejoiced in Him, it was really in earthly brightness, friends, comforts, mirth, and the voice of gladness. Did we at such times spread our garments in His path? for after the Apostles had brought the colt, they then gave up all; as St. Paul says, "I will very gladly spend, and be spent for you^c." Or did we not rather try to gather up and enhance the brightness for ourselves, feeling secure in His gifts, and caring too little for others' needs?

He knows what best will fulfil that begun in us at Baptism, and "make us like Him:" if only we do not thwart Him, but try to say from the heart, "Surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there will also thy servant be^d." For as on the Mount of Olives, lit up by the western sun, in joy and gladness, so on the way of the

^c 2 Cor. xii. 16.

^d 2 Sam. xv. 21.

Cross there followed Him a great company of people, and of women. If we go forth to meet Him, in joy or in sorrow, in the gladness of Christmas or the gloom of Lent, at the wedding-feast or in the funeral-train, it will still be blessing, still companionship with Him.

He calls us now, "sworn liegemen of the Cross and thorny crown," to arise from our beds of sloth, and come apart with Him for forty days into the desert; to put away some self-indulgence, to use some self-denial; to consider what sin is, and what it cost Him; to consider what are our own especial sins, for which He died; that so seriousness may be added to our repentance, and strength to our faith. It is He, the Lord of love and joy, Who calls us, not now to feasting, but to fasting; Who asks us to overcome our natural shrinking from what is hard or mournful; Who bids us to sorrow with Him for a little while, that we may have fulness of gladness hereafter. The spirit in which we begin Lent is apt to colour the whole time; either the spirit of grudging to part for a time with anything pleasant, or that which makes us rise up willingly at His word, following in the footsteps of all those blessed ones who long ago went forth to greet Him.

Thursday.

OUR LORD WEeping OVER JERUSALEM.

Mine eye runneth down with rivers of waters for the destruction of the daughters of my people.—

LAM. iii. 48.

BEHOLDING the city, He wept, wept for the slain of the daughters of His people. The rejoicing multitude beheld only the fair city in the calm, bright evening light of an Eastern spring, but He beheld “the virgin daughter of His people broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow^e.” He, to Whom time is not, beheld all the coming anguish, “heard the sound of the trumpet, and the alarm of war^f.” He “beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger^g.” He came now as the Healer and Deliverer, and knew they would reject Him, and He wept: “For My people is foolish, they have not known Me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. The whole city shall flee for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen^h.” The tears of Jesus! tears that men will turn from their own true happiness and good; not even the tears of

• Jer. xiv. 17.

^f Ibid. iv. 19.

^g Ibid. 26.

^h Ibid. 22, 29.

God incarnate availing, unless man will yield himself of free choice to God. Our awful liberty is this, that we may waste His sorrows for us, that we must choose good if we would have it.

To Jerusalem He said, "Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee¹;" yet to her the full mystery of His love had not been made known; to her He had not yet come with dyed garments as one who had trodden the winepress alone. If, beholding the city He wept over her sin and punishment, does He not grieve beholding each heart once dedicated to Him, seeing all its blindness, unbelief, self-seeking, rejection of Him? Does Jesus grieve to behold my heart? grieve to behold all the future sorrow and anguish which it must endure as the due reward of sin, even if, through His infinite love, I am not cast out of the sight of His eyes? We know that He doth not afflict willingly; often, perhaps, He may long to bestow His comforts and blessings, temporal and spiritual, upon us; but sees that we are making it impossible, that neither in God's righteous retribution, nor in His mercy, can it be so. Does He weep over us, knowing the possibilities of even earthly brightness which lay in His plan for us, the joy and comfort which might be ours had we known the things which belonged to our peace? Even now, though it may be we must bear that our sins should take such hold on us that we are not able to

¹ Jer. iv. 18.

look up, still, as long as our probation lasts, we may turn to His endless pity, accepting the punishment, however bitter, of our iniquity ; and remembering that the penances He lays on us do not prevent His forgiveness, our hearts may be so watered by His tears that they may not be wholly without fruit to Him for the time to come.

Friday.

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest My soul depart from thee.—JER. iii. 8.

OUR Lord came to the Temple on the day after His triumphant entry, to cleanse it by chastisement. He had uttered no word of reproof the day before. Yet He had looked round about upon all things:—

“ On Sunday eve with many a palm, .
 With many a chant divine,
 It came, that eye so still and calm
 Far searching aisle and shrine ;
 Happy the few, that hour
 Who with adoring hearts knelt to that gaze of power.”

He, the “righteous Judge, strong and patient,” beheld all the desecration, all the unrighteousness wrought in His Father’s house, and was silent ; only the children’s voices were heard, singing to Him as to God. “And for the Apostles also there was hence no small consolation. For that they might not be perplexed, how being unlearned they should be able to publish the Gospel ; the children anticipate them, and remove all their anxiety, teaching them that He would grant them utterance Who made even these to sing praise.”

“ But though He had done so many miracles before them^k,” yet the Scribes and chief priests believed not

^k St. John xii. 37.

on Him. The children, the blind, the lame received Him. Neither to the silent reproof of His presence, nor to His open chastening, did the teachers of the people bow.

He comes to us now in both ways ; do we receive Him like the children, or like the Scribes ? He comes to us in joy, with palms of gladness and the voice of blessed children, bringing happiness to our homes ; silent and unseen, known only by His benefits and the joy of many a day, but looking round about upon all things, "watching by the Christian hearth," beholding the bodies once made temples of the Holy Ghost, and knowing with a perfect knowledge whether they are profaned by vain or selfish, or idle or angry thoughts, words, and actions. Happy indeed the few who in the silent blessing of His gaze forget Him not, but watching and loving Him, offer themselves a living sacrifice to Him. If His presence and the children's songs of praise had sufficed to shame the defilers of the Temple, there would have been no need for the severe teaching of the next day. Yet happy they also "who for His scourge made duteous way." The last, bitterest offence, is to turn upon His chastening. When the Scribes heard what He had done, they were sore displeased, they sought how they might destroy Him, and they were angered by the voice of the children. And this was the beginning of their utter rejection of Him. So with us, with me ; Can there be anything so likely to destroy the life

of Christ in the soul as the angry receiving of His chastisements? the turning from those who take them meekly? As of old, so now, it is the childlike, the poor, who take them best, bear them most sweetly; but at least we may try not to be like the Scribes, remembering that if He chastens those who bear no fruit, or only evil fruit, yet the chastisement of our peace was upon Him first; and that His Cross can turn our heavy penance into a token of forgiving love.

“ Ah! my dear, angry Lord!
Since Thou dost love,—yet strike;
Cast down,—yet help afford;
Sure, I will do the like.

“ I will complain,—yet praise;
I will bewail,—approve;
And, all my sour-sweet days,
I will lament,—and love.”

Saturday.

THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

• • *Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?—ISA. l. 2.*

OUR Lord's curse on the barren fig-tree is both a parable and an alarming warning to us, lest we bear leaves only and not fruit. "Who does not fear when in this lesson he sees with the eyes of the heart the withered tree,—withered at that word spoken to it, 'Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.'"
We know who were primarily typified by the fig-tree found dried up, as now our Lord passed with His Apostles to His last visit to the Temple, His last discourse to His countrymen. "For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant: and He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry¹." "Not that all were reprobate, for out of it were called those who in sincerity and truth waited for the salvation of God. For it was not in vain that the Lord Himself had come to none but the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and in others, after He was crucified, and was exalted into heaven, He found the fruit of repentance, and these He did not make to wither, but cultivated them in His field, and

¹ Isa. v. 7.

watered them with His word. They lay hid here and there among thorns, as though wasted and dispersed by the wolves; and because they lay hid among thorns, He did not come to find them, save when torn by the thorns of His Passion; yet come He did, He found, He redeemed them. They had slain, not Him so much as themselves. They were saved by Him Who was slain for them; they were pricked in conscience, who had pricked Him with the spear; and being pricked, they sought for counsel; received it; when it was given, repented; found grace, and believing, drunk that Blood which in their fury they had shed. But they who would not receive Him were figured in that fig-tree. To this day we come to them, and find with them all the witness of the Prophets.

“But these are but leaves; Christ is an hungred and He seeketh for fruit; but finds no fruit among them, because He finds not Himself among them. For he has no fruit who has not Christ. When He came to the tree seeking fruit, He knew that it was not the time for it; what the cultivator of the tree knew, did not its Creator know? but He sought fruit on it, and withered it away, as a parable in action; as though He would say to us, ‘I have no delight in the withering away of this tree, I have not designed to do this without any cause for it, but only because I desired thereby to convey to you a lesson you might the more regard; it is not on a tree without sense that I have inflicted punishment, but I have made thee fear, whosoever

thou art, that dost consider the matter, that thou mightest not despise Christ when He is an hungred, that thou mightest love rather to be enriched with fruit, than to be overshadowed with leaves.'” To us He comes also, torn with the thorns of His Passion, has come since our childhood, not only as to the Jews before His death, but with all the sweetness and power of His ineffable suffering; His love no new thing to receive and believe in, but mingled with all our earliest and dearest memories. He comes, seeking some fruit besides the fair show of leaves, of outward profession. What has He found in me? what will He find now? during this Lent?

FIRST WEEK IN LENT.

Monday.

THE PARABLES IN THE TEMPLE.

The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.—1 SAM. xv. 28.

Two distinctive points of teaching are common to all our Lord's parables during His last visit to the Temple. They set forth opportunities and privileges accepted or rejected, and declare the righteous judgment of God in taking them away from those who reject them, and giving them to others. The father and his two sons,—the same command given to both,—a free obedience needful; the vineyard let out to husbandmen, who for a time might give or refuse the fruit to the messengers of the lord of the vineyard; the marriage feast,—the guests invited,—the choice of acceptance or refusal in their own power. And in all three parables there is the distinctest teaching of blessings rejected or despised being bestowed on others. In the first, "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you^a."

^a St. Matt. xxi. 31.

In the parable of the vineyard, "He will let out His vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render Him the fruit in their season^b." In the parable of the wedding-feast, the guests are called in from the highways to fill the place of the unworthy. The desire of our Lord for the acceptance by His creatures of His benefits is so great, that when those to whom they are first offered refuse them, the very stones cry out, those who were once hard and cold in unbelief, and so from the stones children are raised up to Abraham.

His last parables are a prophecy as well as teaching, a prophecy fulfilled before our eyes. The Church, His repenting son, formed of those once walking according to the course of this world, *has* gone to work in His vineyard; she has rendered Him of the fruit, in the lives of her saints,—the purity of her children,—the death of her martyrs; by the incense of her worship,—by her ceaseless intercessions,—by her works of mercy. His wedding has been furnished with guests. But as the Church was gathered in to fill the place of those who "judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life," so in the Church, there is the disobedient son, there are those who, partaking of all the blessings of His vineyard, will yield no fruit to the Lord or to His servants, there is the guest at His feast without the wedding garment. He beholds His Church as a whole, "a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such

^b St. Matt. xxi. 41.

thing, holy and without blemish ^c ;” but each one of us must ask, “Am I, once made regenerate and His child by adoption and grace, daily renewed, daily forgiven and cleansed, so that I may have part with those who, having washed their robes and made them white, now walk with Him in white?” Alas ! even to the forgiven, how many opportunities and privileges, once neglected or refused, are for ever lost !

“Our faded crown, despised and flung aside,
Shall on some brother’s brow immortal bloom.”

The crown of dutifulness which might have been ours, but which is for ever lost, as those to whom our duty is owed pass from our sight ; the crown of love in word and deed to others ; the crown of patience in suffering. “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap ^d.” Lord, let the harvest of suffering be in time, and not in eternity, through Thy forgiving love.

^c Eph. v. 27.

^d Gal. vi. 7.

Tuesday.

CHRIST'S ANSWERS TO HIS QUESTIONERS.

In vain have I smitten your children ; they received no correction.—JER. ii. 30.

OUR Lord's manner of dealing with the three last attempts to entangle Him in His talk is much to be observed by us. He, in Whom were all stores of wisdom, Who *was* Wisdom, does not confound His assailants by any new declarations of divine doctrine or precept. He deals differently with dishonest cavers and with earnest enquirers; does not teach the former as He did His disciples, when they said to Him, "Declare unto us this parable," but replies to them rather after the manner of His answers to the threefold attack of the Evil One in the wilderness; making the very matter by which they hoped to entangle Him an occasion of clearing-up the difficulty; causing them to find the answer for themselves; in two cases by appeals to that Scripture which they knew so well, in the other by a lesson from one of the homeliest things of every-day life, the coin in common use. To the questions of the Sadducees the answer is, "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God?" To that of the lawyer put forward by the Pharisees, He replies again by words from the Book of Moses. May we not learn a lesson from this our

Lord's mode of dealing with such difficulties? There is One, very clever and crafty, who knows what an advantage he will gain over us if he can but disturb us, who always finds his best fishing in troubled waters. And the difficulties suggested by him, and which he often finds his best mode of hindering really earnest souls, are generally unreal, morbid, born of some desire to escape a duty, or to avoid seeing the plain teaching of God and of His Church. There *are* real difficulties and perplexities, times when we must come to Christ's ambassadors and say, "Declare unto me this parable;" but a conscience kept sensitive through obedience to duty, will have an instinctive feeling of the difference between such difficulties and those which would only disturb the spiritual life; there is in the one case a certain quiet in the midst of doubt or difficulty, a "calm unrest," a contentment to wait patiently until an opportunity comes for finding the light: in the other case, there is a feeling of fretfulness, of impatience, of willingness to be disturbed, and to let our difficulty interfere with our devotions or our duty. How must we meet such times, which are in themselves a real temptation, even if the special difficulty suggested is unreal? How, but by trying to imitate Christ our Example, by saying to the Evil One, "Why temptest thou me, thou hypocrite?" and then casting about to try whether in the thousand parables of common life which surround us, in the (so-called) chance words we hear or read, there may not be a suffi-

cient answer to our perplexity; or whether, if those fail us, we may not find it in some familiar words of Holy Scripture. It seems as if it would certainly be a surer and more wholesome victory over our enemies, to baffle their devices by the use of such simple and every-day means, than by extraordinary exertions or searchings; the worst being that the very temper of mind most likely to conceive or entertain such unreal perplexities, is the one least likely to perceive their true nature; but still prayer for help, and careful following of any gleam of light, will give us that reality and simplicity which we might not naturally possess.

Wednesday.**THE WARNING AGAINST THE PHARISEES.**

Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?—PROV. xv. 11.

As at the end of our Lord's ministry St. John tells us, as the reason of His rejection by the elders of the people, that "they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God," so in this last warning against their example, our Lord's teaching is directly against the unreality, untruthfulness, and ignoble thoughts which lay at the root of their would-be service for God. As if He could be deceived by such service, as if there were not more hope for those who made no pretence of obeying Him than for these, in everything bearing an outward show of religion. Yet has not His Eye, resting in grief upon us, often seen that of us it was true, that such and such things were done to be seen of men? Unconsciously perhaps often; until we watch, we do not know how hard it is to strip off all such considerations, and to place the soul alone and naked in His sight with Whom we have to do, asking and receiving from Him the gift of the single eye, of simplicity of aim. Yet nothing really noble or enduring has ever been done for Him or His Church, save

• St. John xii. 43.

by those who in His grace and strength had learned so to feel; who, kindled with some spark of enthusiasm for the Divine Person who once passed through life desiring nothing but His Father's glory and our salvation, followed afar off in His footsteps, and were enabled to behold with contempt that for which we naturally strive. Therefore what our Lord says here against the Scribes He says, "accusing them of vainglory, which kind of thing was their ruin. This drew them off from God, this caused them to strive before other spectators, and ruined them. For whatever kind of spectators any one may have, since it hath become his study to please these, such also are the contests he exhibits. And he that wrestles among the noble, such also are the conflicts he takes in hand, but he among the cold and supine, himself also becomes more remiss." Our Lord tries to kindle in His disciples, in those who in truth were to wrestle unto death among the noblest, this nobility of aim; by a few simple words, casting, as it were, a clear intense light on the conduct which might have misled them, teaching them what manner of conversation theirs was to be who were to sit in His seat, as the Scribes in Moses' seat, and to be teachers and fathers in His Church. All the grievous faults against which He warns springing from the one root,—love of men's praise rather than God's, the outward pretension to holiness, the seeking high places, the desire to be lords over God's heritage. So has it been ever since in the kingdom of His Church, the kingdom of each

family, the kingdom of each soul. One of old writes, "It comes upon me even now to weep, when I hear of the first seats, and the greetings, and consider how many ills were hence engendered to the Churches of God." How many ills have been hence engendered to my own soul! that for which I should ever strive left out of sight, allowing my mind to dwell on the passing, worthless approbation or praise of men, until the thought of His praise and approval was dim and obscured. Those who live in kings' courts, and seek high places there, do not concern themselves as to what is thought of them among the lowest outcasts. Nay, rather, they who once love intensely are moved by no considerations which would injure their service to the beloved One. Our Lord, having warned them against this grievous pest of vainglory, instructs them how they may escape it; by humility. "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant: for whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." He continually reminds them of this virtue. "On the Mount, beginning the Beatitudes, He began from hence." And in this place in His last teaching, He plucks up pride by the roots, shewing both the sins which it causes, and its consequence, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased."

† St. Matt. xxiii. 11, 12.

Thursday.

THE EIGHT WOES.

Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.

Ps. li. 6.

THE eight woes pronounced by Him Who came to bring blessing, are directed against the consequences of that vainglory against which He had just warned His disciples. For this became a cause to them of all their evils, namely, that they did all things for display. Blinding others, they became blind themselves. Our Lord rends away the false gloss and covering by which they strove to disguise their sin; by "one rough word" shrivelling and burning up all such pretences, the long prayers, the leading men away from the eternal truth of God and fixing their attention on small observances, the care for outward propriety, the vainglory which shewed itself even in their condemnation of what was wrong, when they said, "If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets!" O infinite woe and sorrow, that He Who sees all as it is, should call them whited sepulchres, hypocrites, serpents. David of old used the same comparisons: "Their throat is an open sepulchre, they flatter with their tongue," their "poison is like the poison of a serpent." Yet "that *they*

ε Ps. v. 9; lviii. 4.

should be such persons is not *so* dreadful a thing (although it be dreadful) as that *we*, that have been counted worthy to become temples of God, should become sepulchres, having as much ill savour. He in whom Christ dwells, and the Holy Spirit hath worked, and such great mysteries,—that he should be a sepulchre, what wretchedness is this! What mournings and lamentations doth this call for, when the members of Christ have become a tomb of uncleanness! Consider how thou wast born, of what things thou hast been counted worthy, what manner of garment thou hast received, how thou wast built a temple without a breach! how fair! not adorned with gold, neither with pearls, but with the Spirit, that is more precious than these.” Yet the gifts which we have wasted He will give to us again, the garments which we have defiled He will wash in His own blood, the temple we have well-nigh ruined He will rebuild, if only we acknowledge our wretchedness, and try not to cover our ruin with a fair-seeming show. “Men do any evil, undergo any peril, to avoid shame. God brings before us that deepest and eternal shame, ‘the shame and everlasting contempt,’ in presence of Himself, and angels, and devils, and the good, that we may avoid shame by avoiding evil.” Hypocrisy and pride, the desire to seem fair to men, frustrate even His grace. The utter folly as well as sin of such a desire is to be considered. Even here it is not really successful, the inward evil betraying itself; while with God’s saints

the grace which they would rather hide than declare oftentimes breaks through its earthly dwelling-place, "casting a beam on the outward shape, the unpolluted temple of the mind," making even the world acknowledge their beauty. But were it otherwise, (and our Lord speaks of those full of uncleanness who *appear* beautiful outward,) the time is short. Our bodies, whether temples of the Holy Ghost or sepulchres of all uncleanness, must return to dust; the countenance which has deceived man will be hidden from sight, the voice which has spoken untruthfully will be stilled, and the soul, naked and alone, will be face to face with Him, Who, all our lives, beholds us even as He will do then; penitent, washed daily in the fountain opened from His pierced side, or unconscious of our need for cleansing, loving and seeking the praise of men. O awful moment, when even His redeemed must feel how often they preferred that praise to His, when in the utter loneliness of death they know that there is none to whom they can fly *from* God, save *to* God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Friday.**THE WIDOW'S MITE.**

The palace is not for man, but for the Lord God.

Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?—1 CHRON. xxix. 1, 5.

ONE commendation is uttered by our Lord during His last visit to the Temple. He had looked round about upon all things on the day of His triumphal entry, had marked all there was to sadden Him, all He must reprove,—the sellers of merchandise, the money-changers, the Scribes and Pharisees sitting in Moses' seat and corrupting the law of God,—and now as He sits over against the treasury, His eyes at length see that which He can praise. Only a poor woman, but a present example of the contrary to that which He has just reproved with such awful severity. Poor, and a widow,—unlearned probably, since of the poorest class; but taught of God, full of simplicity, making no pretence, for she does not try to conceal how small, (as men count,) her gift is, leaving it to God to know that she has given all. The one bright example to dwell upon and try to follow amongst the evil against which our Lord warns us on that last day. How shall I follow it? First, by giving like her, with simplicity, be it much or little, remembering that it is cast in unto the offerings of God, and that it matters

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not at all what man thinks about it. Also, not to neglect to give through authorized channels, such as the offertory, the clergy, societies sanctioned by the fathers of the Church. She whom Christ commended did not think, in her dutiful simplicity, that her offering was too small to cast into the Temple treasury. Then we must remember that what our Lord commends in her gift is not its smallness, as seems often thought, but its real largeness. Not until we have done like her, and given all we possess for the service of the Church, have we any right to speak of "our mite" as though what is left for God, when we have freely spent on ourselves, had any likeness to the gift of the royal-hearted widow. And she, praised by Him Who sees not as man sees, Who tries hearts and reins, had doubtless first given herself to God before she gave Him all her substance. There are two mites entrusted to the care of each of us,—entrusted to me, which over and over again, at the most solemn moments of our lives, in God's house, we dedicate to Him, offering and presenting ourselves, our souls and bodies, a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Him. He is present, hearing our vows, beholding our gifts, as truly as when He sat over against the treasury in His Temple. But not only present then, His Eye is on us in our homes, when we have left His altars, watching how we keep our vows. Having offered up body and soul to Him, do we, do I, remember that I am not my own, and not only sometimes but always, glorify Him in body and spirit, which are His ?

Do I try each moment to do that which I believe God would have me do at that moment? or do I regard only my own wishes and convenience? or let hours pass in listless half-occupation or idleness? If I rest, is it to gain strength for fresh service to Him? If I am in society, am I watchful not to hurt others by example, often speaking to God in my heart? Do I observe any hints or rules given me by those in authority over me? Am I watchful over that member of the body which is a fire, a world of iniquity, and yet which may be so especially used to His service? and over thoughts, lest they should mar the sacrifice of my soul?

“Mystically, the rich men who cast their gifts into the treasury signify the Jews puffed up with the righteousness of the law; the poor widow, the simplicity of the Church, which is called poor because it has either cast away the spirit of pride, or its sins, as if they were worldly riches. She casts two mites into the treasury, because in God’s sight, in Whose keeping are all the offerings of our works, she presents her gifts, whether of love to God and her neighbour, or of faith and prayer. And these excel all the works of the proud Jews, for they of their abundance cast into the offerings of God, in that they presume on their righteousness, but the Church casts in all her living, for everything that hath life she believes to be the gift of God.”

Saturday.

OUR LORD'S DEPARTURE FROM THE TEMPLE.

How is the faithful city become an harlot ! it was full of judgment ; righteousness lodged in it ; but now murderers.—ISA. i. 21.

HE had come there now these three days seeking fruit, and after that last mournful utterance of rejected love, "ye would not," He leaves His Father's house "desolate," since His Presence was finally withdrawn, and crossing the brook Kedron and the narrow valley, He climbs the Mount of Olives, and there sat down with His disciples, over against the Temple. Perhaps as He had said, "your house is left unto you desolate," that His disciples, marvelling at His words, came to Him, "shewing Him the beauty of the Temple, and wondering if so much beauty was to be destroyed, and materials so costly, and variety of workmanship past utterance ;" and He no longer talks to them of desolation merely, but foretells an entire destruction. Most beautiful it was, and for thirty-three years had been filled with a glory which the first temple never knew, the Presence of God incarnate ; yet now as He sits and gazes upon it, "comes wafted from the Mount His stern farewell," leaving no blessing, but telling of coming judgment and anguish.

The awfulness of the lesson for us, for me, since He has "deigned the Christian's heart to call His Church and Shrine." He may have given many outward gifts to that shrine, many inward, beside gifts of grace,—He may have given beauty of body, natural beauty of mind, talent, intellect, genius, and men may speak of us as adorned with goodly stones and gifts, while in Christ's sight there may be nothing in us which will abide the day of His coming. For where He is not, there may be every other gift and beauty, and yet all is nothing.

"Christ, when He had foretold all that should come upon Jerusalem, went forth out of the Temple,—He, Who while He was in it, had upheld the Temple that it should not fall. And so each man, being the temple of God by reason of the Spirit of God dwelling in him, is himself the cause of his being deserted, that Christ should depart from him."

Jerusalem was lost, because she would not shelter herself under His wings. And this is what He requires of us, that we should accept the refuge which He has provided, accept Him as Saviour, Master, and Guide. "Doth He not justly turn away from us and punish us, when He is giving up Himself unto us for all things, and we are resisting Him? For whether thou art desirous to adorn thyself, 'Let it,' He saith, 'be with My ornaments;' or to arm thyself, 'with My arms;' or to clothe thyself, 'with My raiment;' or to feed thyself, 'at My Table;' or to journey, 'on My way;' or to inherit, 'My inheritance;' or to

enter into a country, 'the city of which I am Builder and Maker;' or to build a house, 'among My Tabernacles. For I, so far from asking thee for a recompense of the things I give thee, do even make Myself owe thee a recompense for this very thing, if thou be willing to use all I have.' What can be equal to this munificence? 'I am Father, I am Brother, I am Bridegroom, I am dwelling-place, I am Food, I am Raiment, I am Root, I am Foundation, all, whatsoever thou wilt, I am.'

“‘Be thou in need of nothing; I will be even a Servant, for I came to minister, not to be ministered unto; I am Friend, and Member, and Head, and Brother, and Sister, and Mother; I am all; only cling thou closely to Me. I was poor for thee, and a wanderer for thee, on the Cross for thee, in the tomb for thee, above I intercede for thee to the Father. Thou art all things to Me,—brother, and joint-heir, and friend, and member.’ What wouldest thou more? Why dost thou turn away from Him who loveth thee?” Shall I, too, refuse to be gathered under His wings?

SECOND WEEK IN LENT.

Monday.

OUR LORD'S THREE LAST PARABLES.

And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them: and I will be with thee.—DEUT. xxxi. 23.

Two lessons are common to these three parables,—one, that a time of probation, during the absence of their Master, must be passed through by all Christians. Only for two or three days longer was He to be with them, as He had been since they followed Him; and so in these last parables the thought of work for an *absent* Lord is especially dwelt upon,—the Lord delaying His coming, the Bridegroom tarrying, the man travelling into a far country; for man once more re-enters Paradise, yea, the Heaven of heavens, the land that is very far away. The other lesson common to all three parables,—that this probation and watch to do service to an absent Master most especially concerns those set to rule in His Church, and it is to

“His disciples privately,” that these His last parables are spoken,—to those who were to be the twelve foundations of the new Jerusalem, whom He was sending, even as His Father had sent Him, who were to spend all, and suffer all, and to lay down life itself for His Body’s sake, the Church. To them He speaks of the faithful and wise servant, made ruler over his Lord’s household ; of the virgins chosen to welcome the Bridegroom ; of the Master’s own servants, to whom He delivered His goods. Leaving them now, He warns them of their coming trial, but comforts them by carrying on their thoughts to the time of His return ; tells them of the blessedness of the servant whom He should find giving meat in due season to His household ; of the marriage-feast prepared for the faithful watchers ; of the loving welcome awaiting those faithful over a few things. “What can be equal to this honour ? What manner of speech will be able to set forth the dignity, the blessedness, when the King of Heaven, He that possesseth all things, bids us to enter into His joy ?” What greater thing can be given to a faithful servant, than to be with his Lord and see his Lord’s joy ? For though these parables are first spoken to the Apostles and their successors, yet surely our blessed Master speaks to me, to every one of us, by them. If we have not been made rulers over Christ’s household, yet “we are stewards of our own possessions, not less than he who dispenses the alms of the Church. As he has

not a right to squander the things given for the maintenance of the poor, even so neither may we squander our own. We desire that what we give should be carefully dispensed,—will not God require His own of us with greater strictness, not suffering it to be wasted at random? For if in worldly matters no man lives for himself, but artizan, and soldier, and husbandman, and merchant, all of them contribute to the common good, much more ought we to do this in things spiritual.” He gave us the power to help one another, that bringing us into need one of another, He might make our love for one another more fervent.

All Christians have their own work to do, their own ministry to fulfil in their Lord’s absence; “and every person, if he will but mark it, has a certain sense and appetite for perfection, breathed, as it were, naturally into his heart, so that he would rather do a thing well than ill, if he could but do it without trouble or self-denial. This is all God’s silent teaching, to make us understand that whatever our ministry is, He would have us make full proof of it.” If we, if I, try always to do it as to the Lord, present though absent, I shall not then pride myself on partial success. “The glory to come will quite drown the faint brightness just at hand.”

Tuesday.

THE DAY OF PREPARATION.

The house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries; I will therefore now make preparation for it.—1 CHRON. xxii. 5.

THE day beginning on Thursday evening, and ending on Friday evening, being called in all four Gospels the day of preparation—of preparation for the slaying of the Paschal Lamb, which we know was in the evening; (not on this Thursday evening, but on the following, when Christ our Passover died): a difficulty arises from three of the Evangelists speaking as if this Supper were the Passover, but the last as if it was not; for on Friday morning the Jews would not enter the judgment-hall, “that they might eat the Passover;” and St. John also mentions the supposition of the disciples’ that Judas had been desired to buy what they needed against the Feast, which could not have been, if they were then themselves partaking of the Paschal Lamb. And St. Mark, though making mention of “eating the Passover” with an apparent application to the Supper, says expressly, it was the day “when they killed the Passover;” and St. Luke speaks of it as the day “in which the Passover must be killed.” “For indeed

that day, from Thursday evening (at sunset) to Friday evening, was the day of the preparation, and the Passover must indeed be killed on that day, as Christ was." And the Passover must be eaten on the festival day, the great Sabbath that ensued, which began at sunset on Friday evening, the Passover being eaten at any hour before midnight, not on the day in which it was killed, so that we cannot consider the Thursday evening or Friday morning as the Feast. "Nor does it seem likely that Judas would have left in the midst of the Paschal Supper, nor would his leaving them have been supposed to be for such a purpose, nor would they have reclined at the Paschal Supper, for the Law required them to stand." But though we cannot suppose it was strictly the Passover, since that could not be eaten before the Lamb was slain, which we know was on the Friday evening, perhaps we may consider it "not as the Paschal Supper according to the Law, strictly and properly speaking, nor altogether the same by anticipation; but as the new Passover instituted of Christ Himself, and having a reference to the great Paschal Feast about to take place, it being the same day then commencing on which the Lamb was slain, though not when it was eaten, but "the day of preparation." Or as some suppose that our Lord did eat the Passover by a kind of anticipation in some sense, this Last Supper "partaking of the character of the following Festival, particularly so when it was declared

that that Festival would not be kept at all (excepting in the kingdom of God); so that this 'preparation' was, as far as the Jewish rite was concerned, the consummation also." "But whatever that Supper may have been as bearing on the legal Feast, we know that it was the great and new Passover, the one Christian Festival; and the very ambiguity in Holy Scripture on the subject may have its lesson for us; for as three Evangelists seem to speak as if it were the Passover, but the last as if it was not," so indeed it is the Christian Passover, the great memorial sacrifice, and again it is not—it is not the Jewish Passover, nor the one and only sacrifice on the Cross. And may there not be this lesson to learn from the "day of preparation,"—that it behoves us all, myself, to prepare for seasons of especial grace. We know not, day by day, for what we are preparing,—for what God is preparing us. We are perhaps weaving, as we think, marriage garlands, and they turn in our hands into funeral wreaths; but this we know, that if we are careful to prepare to receive Christ, we shall be rightly prepared for what may come of joy or sorrow. Who knows what we may miss of grace at Holy Communion, by not having made any earnest endeavour to prepare a guest-chamber in our hearts for Him? Especially now may we take this lesson home, for "the beginning of Lent is like a long straight road, at the end of which appears the Cross of our Saviour."

During Holy Week we shall be gathered round His Cross, but can we fulfil our duty of then giving ourselves up to contemplate it if we do not prepare for it? Can we do so all of a sudden? Who knows what we may miss of the fulness of our Easter blessing by not prizing or gathering up carefully the lessons of these "days of preparation?"

Wednesday.**OUR LORD WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET.**

Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal : and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat.—EXOD. xxx. 18, 19.

THIS day seems, indeed, to have been the “day of preparation” in many ways ; first, of preparation for that great Passover, when, in the sight of God and men, the Blood of the One Lamb, Who taketh away the sin of the world, should be sprinkled on the door-posts of His Church. But it seems also to have been a time of preparation to His disciples, fitting them for the great work which was to be theirs, leading them on from mystery to mystery,—the solemn supper, the cup given to be divided amongst themselves, with the words that it was the last they would share with Him on earth ; then the washing of their feet, the Institution of the blessed Sacrament ; His wonderful teaching, warnings, prayer for them. Now, when they had divided a cup of wine amongst them, and before the Institution of the Eucharist, He, Who had left His Father’s bosom and unclothed Himself of His glory, rises from supper and lays aside His clothes. “The

Evangelist, being about to relate so great an instance of our Lord's humility, reminds us first of His lofty nature:—'Knowing that the Father had given all things into His hand,' i.e. the salvation of the believers, He therefore deemed it right to shew all things that pertained to their salvation, and give them a lesson of humility, by washing His disciples' feet." And as the High-Priest on the day of expiation was girt with a linen girdle, so He girds Himself with a towel, even as when having laid aside His Divine glory He, in the Virgin's womb, wrapped round Him as a girdle our nature; as He had said by His prophet, "As a girdle cleaveth unto the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto Me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the Lord, that they might be unto Me for a people^a." And we are told that "righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins^b," that so by the perfect obedience of one Man many might be made righteous, our sinful bodies made clean by His Body. He pours water into a bason; not as Abraham and Joseph, commanding it to be fetched; but Himself doing it, He Who from His own side was soon to pour forth the stream which should cleanse the world. And then He stoops to the lowliest office of love, washing His servants' feet. "It is our feet, i.e. the affections of our mind, that are to be given up to Jesus to be washed, that our feet may be beautiful;

^a Jer. xiii. 11.^b Isa. xi. 5.

especially if we emulate higher gifts, and wish to be numbered with those who preach glad tidings." How must they ever, through the long years of separation from Him, have looked back to that hour, seen before them that living lesson, the type of all that He was to do for them and all His redeemed in all time, and the practical teaching of humility and self-devotion for others. It is this last lesson that our Lord dwells upon in His words afterwards (for the mystical meaning was soon to be taught upon the Cross), when He had taken His garments and sat down again; even as after His humiliation and suffering He took again His human body, and ate and drank with His disciples. His words then are spoken to me, to all. "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet." "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Like the parable of the good Samaritan, "mystically containing all the economy of redemption, it is given to us, to me, as a lesson of brotherly love, without which the high mysteries and doctrine contained in it would not profit us." Do I try to take our Lord's words as literally as possible? not only not shrinking from, but eagerly embracing, opportunities for serving His poor, not merely through others, and by alms which cost me no self-denial, but "rising from supper," laying aside my own ease and comfort to do them good? A holy man has written, "The very nature of such actions is now changed, for such a practice is not usual among us as a servile office

at all, as it then was; and therefore this, if literally performed, would not be the same in spirit and character." But there are many offices as lowly, and sorely needed by Christ's poor, which we may perform for them, remembering what a saint of old tells us; "wherever this practice exists not among the saints, they do in heart what they do not by the hand, if they are of the number of those spoken of in the Hymn as 'O ye humble and holy men of heart.' But it is much better, and without controversy the true fulfilment, that it should be done by the hands also; nor let a Christian disdain to do what Christ hath done;" rather "wherever we see the print of His shoe in the earth, there may we covet to set our foot too." "And since with Thee is the fountain of life, and an immeasurable profundity of mercies, those whom Thou hast washed by Baptism, whom Thou hast bathed in Thy blood, whom Thou art always washing by forgiving daily, translate Thou from the pools and mud of this world into the most purified kingdom of Thy glory; where no unclean thing can enter; where there is no more need of washing; where our body shall be fashioned like unto the brightness of Thine own. According to Thy promises Thou must needs fulfil this in us, and Thou Who hast begun a good work in us, perfect and establish the same."

Thursday.

THE WARNINGS TO ST. PETER.

And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?—2 KINGS viii. 13.

ALL through this awful night St. Peter is continually before us, sent with St. John to prepare the Passover, forbidding our Lord to wash his feet,—then eagerly claiming His cleansing,—earnestly anxious to know who the traitor should be,—questioning our Lord as to whither He was going,—warned by Him,—vehemently protesting his fidelity,—assured by name that his Master had prayed for him,—chosen to watch with Him,—reproached for sleeping,—defending Him with blows,—specially addressed and reprovèd,—following Him to the High-Priest's house,—denying Him,—meeting His look,—bitterly repenting. It has been thought that as he thrice denied our Lord, and afterwards was three times questioned by our Lord, three times professed his love, and three times received the pastoral commission, so that on this evening he was thrice warned, and thrice confidently asserted his fidelity; the first time being that related by St. John, when, after Judas had gone out, our Lord had spoken to the disciples with increased confidence and love, and that St. Peter asks Him, “whither goest Thou?” evidently from our Lord's

answer, (more to his thoughts than to his words,) with the eager desire to accompany Him. The second warning, if indeed there were three, seems to have been that related by St. Luke; the third, that which is told by St. Matthew and St. Mark, who both say expressly that it occurred after they had gone out to the Mount of Olives; and there is a difference in the circumstance introducing the warning in St. John and St. Luke; in the one, it is St. Peter's question, "whither goest Thou^c?" in the other, our Lord's words, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you^d." But whether the three accounts are of one occurrence or not, perhaps we may suppose that St. Peter's confidence was partly the re-action from anxious misgiving lest our Lord's words, "one of you shall betray Me," should concern him—that when his fears were relieved, they were followed by self-satisfaction and self-confidence; and this is full of warning for us, for me.

"Because the Lord said He had prayed for Peter's faith, Peter, conscious of present affection and fervent faith, but unconscious of his coming fall, does not believe he could fall from Christ." And how often in our spiritual life it happens that relief from some over-anxious doubts or fears is succeeded by too great easiness and want of effort and watching, especially if our trouble has been caused by any want of trust in God's mercy through Christ, and desire to be something

^c St. John xiii. 36.

^d St. Luke xxii. 31.

in ourselves in His sight. Then, if we are comforted by those over us, there is the temptation to think, "perhaps I am not so bad as I thought," which, if yielded to, is certain to lead to carelessness and to faults. Or if we dwell on others' sins, judging them in thought or word, or thinking perhaps almost unconsciously "certainly I am free from this fault," how often we find ourselves falling into the same, or the like sins.

One of old writes, "What mean these things, O Peter? When He was saying, 'One of you shall betray Me,' thou didst fear lest thou shouldst be the traitor, and didst constrain the disciple to ask, although conscious to thyself of no such thing; but now, when He is plainly crying out, and saying, 'All shall be offended,' art thou gainsaying it? Therefore He checked him, not compelling him to the denial, God forbid! but leaving him destitute of His help, and convicting human nature." And another lately departed, "For this love, when it leaned on its own strength, only led him to more signal feelings than others: but hereafter he shall be much forgiven, and loving much; and through repentance, he shall be made 'perfect in love,' following unto death the Master 'thrice denied, yet thrice beloved,' and 'strengthening his brethren,' sustaining the weaker brethren, that they despair not of pardon, as his Lord by His prayer had protected his faith."

"Moreover, observe how after the resurrection,

taught by his fall, he speaks to Christ more humbly, and does not any more resist His words. All this his fall wrought for him; for, before, he had attributed all to himself, when he ought rather to have said, 'I will not deny Thee if Thou succour me with Thine aid.' But afterwards he shews that everything is to be ascribed to God: 'Why look ye so earnestly upon us, as though by our own power and holiness we had made this man to walk *?'"

Oh! that our own unfaithfulness to Christ might work in us the same effect as in St. Peter! that we might resemble him not only by repentance, but also in the humility which the sense of his weakness wrought in him; that we might feel with him, "my sin is ever before me," that so God may hide His face from our sins, and remember them no more.

* Acts iii. 12.

† Ps. li. 3.

Friday.

JUDAS' TREACHERY REVEALED.

Thy blood be upon thy head ; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed.—2 SAM. i. 16.

It would seem from the account in St. Matthew and St. Mark, that all our Lord's words to Judas, and his final departure, took place before the Eucharist; while, according to the order of circumstances in St. Luke's Gospel, it would seem that it was after it. But St. John, mentioning the eating out of the same dish as our Lord, and the distinct declaration that Judas was the traitor, (occurrences placed by both the two first Evangelists before the Institution of the Holy Eucharist,) says, "he immediately went out;" and St. Luke, being the only one of the Evangelists who speaks of the first cup given,—“the Cup of the Old Testament,” as it has been called,—may, perhaps, have mentioned the Eucharistic Feast immediately after (out of the direct course of events,) “as corresponding with, and the substitute for, those shadows of the law which were then departing.” He also says distinctly that “*after* supper He took the Cup,” while the three other Evangelists all speak of the detection of Judas as taking place *during* supper. But whether he went out before or after the Eucharist, we know that after the washing of the feet, when our

Lord had again sat down with His disciples, He says clearly that the traitor was amongst them; and from a discussion as to which of them should do this thing, the disciples seem to have glided into a strife as to their respective claims to being the greatest. And then (taking the accounts in St. Luke and St. John together), our Lord seems to have reproved them by a reference to His recent action: "Know ye what I have done unto you? Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? but I am among you as He that serveth. Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am ^s."

He then leads their thoughts to the true greatness which was to be theirs. "You are right in supposing that you are on the point of being established in My spiritual kingdom over the world, in order to do good to mankind; but think not that from the benefits you shall confer on the world, you are to bring any credit or honour upon yourselves, for My kingdom is of a far different character. 'Ye shall not be so.' 'The servant is not greater than his Lord.' 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, *as My Father hath appointed unto Me*^h,' a kingdom to be won through humiliation and lowliness." And having told them what their office should be, He adds words which it is of serious importance that we should remember: "He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth Me." Do we, do I, really believe and act on this? Do I honour

^s St. John xiii. 13—17.

^h St. Luke xxii. 26, 29.

Christ by honouring the office of those, even though unworthy, who minister His Word and Sacraments by His authority? or do I really honour, not Him, but men, by despising and forsaking them unless I judge them to be good? or if I do not go so far as this, by want of respect to them in little things, and by forgetting Whose commission they bear? St. Matthew records almost the same words as used by our Lord when He sent the Apostles with power and authority to preach¹. It was addressed to "the twelve," to Judas as well as to the rest; for though evil, he had still part of the ministry and Apostleship, was still a herald of the King, and we have the words of Him Who was Truth, that whosoever received this messenger received Christ. But now He prefaces the declaration, by saying, "I speak not of you all;" for Judas' probation was over, he had forfeited his ministry. Are not our Lord's words fulfilled among other ways in this, that receiving His ministers as coming from Him, we receive Him in the Sacraments which they give to us? "When Jesus had thus said, He was troubled in spirit," and again returns to the loss of that disciple, whom at the last hour He would, if it were possible, warn and save. He says openly that one of them, one that eateth with Him, should betray Him: He gives a token of who the traitor was to St. Peter and St. John; and at last, to the question of Judas replies, "Thou hast said." *He went out, and it*

¹ St. Matt. x. 40.

was night. "He went out, not only from the house, but from Jesus, in Whom there is light and no darkness at all." It was night without and tenfold night within; and the night without was but an emblem of that darkness which is without the Marriage Feast, when the door has been closed, and he that had not on the wedding-garment is cast out "into outer darkness."

Saturday.

INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars . . . She hath mingled her wine, she hath furnished her table . . . she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.—PROV. ix. 1—5.

“HAVING finished the rites of the old Passover, He passes on to the new, which He desires the Church to celebrate in memory of His redemption, substituting for the flesh and blood of the lamb, the Sacrament of His own Flesh and Blood, and being made a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For if the heavenly word has been effectual in other matters, is it ineffectual in heavenly sacraments? Therefore of the bread is made the Body of Christ, and the wine is made Blood by the consecration of the heavenly word.”

THE BREAD.

Three of the Evangelists, and St. Paul, who tells us that he received of the Lord Jesus that which He has delivered to us, relate the institution of this divine Feast. If we combine the first part of the four narratives, it is as follows:—“The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed (St. Paul), as they were eating, Jesus (SS. Matt., Mark) took bread

(SS. Matt., Mark, Luke, Paul), and blessed it (SS. Matt., Mark), gave thanks (SS. Luke, Paul), and brake it (SS. Matt., Mark, Luke, Paul), and gave (SS. Matt., Mark, Luke) to them (SS. Mark, Luke), to the disciples (St. Matt.), and said, Take eat (SS. Matt., Mark, Paul), saying (St. Luke), This is My Body (SS. Matt., Mark, Luke, Paul), Which is given (St. Luke), broken (St. Paul), for you, This do in remembrance of Me (SS. Luke, Paul).

“It would seem as if there were two objects in our Blessed Lord’s intention in His bodily appearances after the Resurrection; the one to shew that it was He Himself Who had arisen again; the other to indicate that it was the same Body, yet under different laws, being made Divine and glorified, and not subject to material restrictions: the one He shewed by the various visible manifestations, by eating and drinking with them, by allowing them, in unspeakable condescension, to touch and feel His sacred Body: the other was shewn by His sudden appearing and disappearing, by telling Mary Magdalene to touch Him not, by shewing Himself in another and unknown form to the disciples going to Emmaus, by His mode of vanishing from them, by appearing before the disciples when the doors were closed, and with something mysterious in His appearance that affrighted them, for they supposed they had seen a spirit.

“Would to God that we might ourselves profit by this instructive lesson of His gracious condescension, that

we to whom He has said, 'Lo, I am with you always,' and 'This is My Body,' might believe it, indeed, to be BHis ody; and yet might forego disputes on the nature of His Body and His most awful Presence, which we must first span the heavens before we shall understand;—nor let the Feast of peace and love be made, by Satan intruding into that Holy Place, a subject of strife and unjust judgments^k."

"How shall we speak to Thee, O Lord;
Or how in silence lie?"

This is the hidden manna,—the Bread and Wine given by the true Melchisedec to the true seed of Abraham,—the cake in the strength of which Elijah went forty days and forty nights,—the shew-bread set alway before the Lord, taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant,—meat which came forth out of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, dead, and behold He is alive,—the cake of barley-bread overturning the tent of the Midianite,—the Tree of Life in the midst of the Garden, restored to us by the Second Adam, that we may take of it and eat, and live for ever. Thou, O Lord, Who never failest them that seek Thee, hast found Bread wherewith to satisfy Thy people here in this wilderness, and with corn and wine hast Thou sustained them. Thou bringest us into Thy banquet-ing-house. And we, what shall we say? how can we even think of the Feast prepared? Shall we not say

^k Rev. Isaac Williams.

to our souls in the words of a Father, "Consider with what sort of honour thou wast honoured, of what sort of Table thou art partaking. That which when Angels behold, they tremble, and dare not so much as look up at It, on account of the brightness that cometh thence, with this we are fed, with this we are commingled, and we are made one body and one flesh with Christ. . . With each one of the faithful doth He mingle Himself in the Mysteries, and whom He begat, He nourishes by Himself. . . Let it be our one sorrow, not to partake of this Food. . . Let no one approach it with indifference, no one faint-hearted, but all with burning hearts, all fervent, all aroused." Thou makest Thyself known, O blessed Lord, in the breaking of bread, taking away the fear of death, and the soul filled with the love which is stronger than death can say in peace, "my Beloved is mine, and I am His¹." For she is made one with Him to whom the Father hath given to have life in Himself,—with the Bread of God Which came down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. And if for our coldness and sin we feel not Thy sensible Presence and sweetness, still we know that Thy word endureth for ever in heaven, that coming in faith and repentance, we shall not fail to receive Thy Body and Blood. There is a difference in the words used by two Evangelists after "This is My Body." One says, "which is given;" another, "which is broken." "Why is this? for of the Paschal Lamb it is expressly

¹ Cant. ii. 16.

said, that 'a bone shall not be broken?' Why is this varied expression, but to indicate that it is His Body, and it is also Bread? His Body is not broken, but 'given' for us; the Bread is not given for us, but is broken.'"

But chiefly, in meditating upon, in receiving this Holy Sacrament, may we fix our eyes and thoughts on Thee, Jesus our Lord, avoiding all vain questionings, and seeking only to be nourished by Thee unto life eternal, Who makest a feast for Thy prodigal son, clothing him with the robe of Thy righteousness, putting the ring of the pledge of Thy covenant on his finger, and on his feet the preparation of the Gospel of Peace. Thy Name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place within Thy Church a pure offering is offered unto Thee, shewing forth Thy death till Thou comest, a Memorial before Thee, even as every Jewish sacrifice foreshadowed Thy one true and perfect Sacrifice.

THIRD WEEK IN LENT.

Monday.

THE CUP OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

*The Lord Himself is the portion of mine inheritance,
and of my cup.—Ps. xv. 5.*

AFTER the same manner also (St. Paul). “Like-wise also (St. Luke), He took (SS. Matthew, Mark, Paul) the cup (SS. Matthew, Mark, Luke, Paul), and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them (SS. Matthew, Mark), saying, Drink ye all of it (St. Matthew); and they all drank of it (St. Mark). And He said unto them (St. Mark), This (SS. Matthew, Mark, Luke, Paul) cup is the New Testament in My Blood (SS. Luke, Paul), is My Blood of the New Testament (SS. Matthew, Mark), which is shed (SS. Matthew, Mark, Luke) for you (St. Luke), for many (SS. Matthew, Mark), for the remission of sins (St. Matthew); this do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of Me (St. Paul).

“Thus did He give into their hands for His Church the greatest gift that He ever consigned unto the world, and with the same extreme simplicity with which in

the beginning He created all things, by His word alone; imparting to them the laws and privileges which they were to observe unto the end. As at the first He said, 'to you it shall be for meat;' and as at last He shall say, 'inherit the kingdom prepared for you;' conveying thereby fulness of bliss and immortality: so now, 'He gave it unto them.' " He gave it to His Church, which He purchased with His own Blood, not only giving it as our ransom, but when "by His own Blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us^a," He bids us drink of it, gives us this heavenly wine which maketh glad the heart of man. It is the Blood of the New Testament, for "where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator^b." And as when Moses sprinkled the people with blood to confirm the old covenant he said, "this is the Blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you^c;" so now, when old things were to pass away, the Mediator of the New Covenant says, "this is My Blood of the New Testament." Of the blood of atonement under the Law it was said, "thou shalt not eat of it," but of this, "drink ye all of it." St. Luke mentions two cups: of the one our Lord said, "take this and divide it among yourselves," "which we may say is a type of the Old Testament; but the other, after the breaking and giving of bread, He Himself imparts to His disciples, and He calls it 'the New Testament in

^a Heb. ix. 13.

^b Ibid. 16.

^c Ibid. 20.

My Blood, which shall be shed for you,' signifying that the New Testament has its beginning in His Blood. The old Passover was ordained to remove the slavery of Egypt; but the blood of the lamb to protect the firstborn: the new Passover was ordained for the remission of sins; but the Blood of Christ to preserve those who are dedicated to God. For this Blood moulds in us a royal image, it suffers not our nobleness of soul to waste away; moreover it refreshes the soul, and inspires it with great virtue. They that partake of it are built up with heavenly virtues, and arrayed in the royal robes of Christ, yea, rather clothed upon by the King Himself."

"We were hungry and athirst, yea, even nigh unto death, and Thou hast given us to eat and to drink of Thine own Body and Thine own Blood. Thou hast called us, the halt, the blind, and the lame unto Thine own heavenly Table; and hast bidden us to invite the halt, the blind, the lame, to our own." Thou art the true Vine, yielding the best wine for Thy beloved, but, O divine Master, what fruit should they not yield who are nourished with this wine! shall they not at least be ready to bear the portion of Thy Cross which Thou layest on them? Thou gavest thanks before giving the cup, though it was the token of Thy bitter suffering. And we, drinking of that cup, grudge to shed one tear.

We may not speak aright of these divine mysteries; even the Church, at the moment of consecration,

“taught, doubtless, by her Lord Himself and His Apostles, (so universal is the remarkable feature referred to,) so frames her memorial, by a change in her mode of expression, as to withdraw from the action, as far as may be, her own personality. Hitherto she has poured forth, with bold heart and lavish hand, all manner of direct address and service to God. But now she suddenly ceases from her own words. Struck with awe at a task so transcending all human speech, she stands reverently aside, and, for all sufficient memorial recites the words and imitates the action of the great High-Priest when giving Himself for the life of the world. It is His Voice, His Hand, that she summons to action now. In all Churches her own voice is silent, her own hand still. ‘The Lord is in His holy temple, and all the earth keeps silence before Him.’ In hushed and awful silence on her part, as of old, does the True Incense carry the True Sacrifice, and the Church herself therein, into the Holy of Holies. The great river of her Eucharistic praise and prayer, flowing in such mighty volume hitherto, is suddenly arrested, as Jordan of old ‘rose up and stood upon an heap, while the ark of the Presence of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, passed by.’ Then, indeed, she resumes with fresh faith her work of service, ‘the waters return and flow over all their banks, as they did before^d.’” And we, catching at most but faint glimpses of His marvellous works of grace, how can we speak of this greatest

^d Archdeacon Freeman.

gift? In the kingdom of God, when, as on that last evening, the Lord of the faithful servants shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, perhaps we shall know what we only see in faint gleams on earth ; till then may we say with St. Ambrose, " I pray Thee, by that wonderful and unspeakable love, where-with Thou deignest so to love us miserable sinners as to wash us from our sins in Thy Blood, teach me, Thine unworthy servant, by Thy Holy Spirit, to approach so great a mystery with such reverence and honour, devotion and fear, as I ought, and as is fitting. Make me, through Thy grace, always so to believe and understand, to conceive and firmly to hold, to think and to speak, of that exceeding mystery, as shall please Thee, and be good for my soul. Let Thy good Spirit enter my heart, and there be heard without utterance, and without the sound of words speak all truth. For Thy mysteries are exceeding deep, and covered with a sacred veil."

" Honey in the lion's mouth,
Emblem mystical, divine,
How the sweet and strong combine ;
Cloven rock for Israel's drouth ;
Treasure-house of golden grain,
By our Joseph laid in store,
In his brethren's famine sore
Freely to dispense again ;
Dew on Gideon's snowy fleece ;
Well from bitter changed to sweet ;
Shewbread laid in order meet,
Bread whose cost doth ne'er increase,

Though no rain in April fall ;
Horeb's manna, freely given,
Showered in white dew from heaven,
Marvellous, angelical ;
Weightiest bunch of Canaan's vine ;
Cake to strengthen and sustain
Through long days of desert pain ;
Salem's monarch's bread and wine ;—
Thou the antidote shall be
Of my sickness and my sin,
Consolation, medicine,
Life and Sacrament to me."

Tuesday.

THE PRAYER OF INTERCESSION.

Solomon had made a brasen scaffold, of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court : and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands towards heaven.—2 CHRON. vi. 13.

HE to Whom the Father sware, saying, "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec," Who had given to His people to eat of the flesh of the one Sacrifice which He was now offering, brings, as Priest, the incense of prayer. If the prayers of all saints are offered on the golden altar that is before the throne, and come up for a memorial before God, what must have been the sweet savour of this divinest prayer, the prayer of God the Son, the Son of Mary? We feel that the prayer of any saint is sacred, and shrink from intruding upon the intercourse of a soul with God. And though we are often told of our Lord's prayers while He was on earth, yet generally He withdrew Himself at such times, even from His nearest. But now, as in the garden later, we are permitted to be present at His prayer, to hear His words as Son of Man interceding for us. How can we ever read them, meditate upon them, remember

them, with sufficient depth of solemn reverence? May there not be this lesson for us in our Lord's thus admitting us to hear His prayer,—that we may carry religious reserve too far? We cannot guard with too sacred reverence our thoughts and feelings about holy things; the more we do so, the more they will be likely to gain in strength, and to be really useful to others, as the violets and lilies which hide themselves give out the sweetest odours. But do we not sometimes let this natural and right reserve turn into a selfish and fastidious silence, when we might perhaps be a help or comfort to others? "There stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known to his brethren;" but to them he opens his whole heart, as now He, Whom Joseph prefigured, allows His brethren to hear His most sacred words.

One not long departed has said, speaking to those devoted to the care of the poor:—"I can conceive nothing more sad than this, that when you are called to minister to the poor, you should do so, indeed, with all tenderness and lovingness, as regards their bodily wants, but as to their souls, far otherwise: that you should allow a feeling of shyness, or awkwardness, or reserve, to hinder you from speaking to them of themselves, telling them of that dear Lord Whom bought them no less than you, pointing them out to the only refuge, leading them—as far as you can—to the foot of the Cross, teaching them, praying for

• Gen. xlv. 1.

them, praying with them. I know of no greater sin, with which Satan has any great chance of tempting you, than this. This is, indeed, to be a sealed fountain, but in a sense which your Lord never meant. Sealed, not for Him, and by Him, and to Him, but for yourselves, and by false shame. Think how it would be, if, hereafter, any one of your poor patients should accuse you at the judgment-seat of God, for not doing that which you might have done for their souls. 'I was able to hear, I would have listened : one word would have made an impression then,—as, never before nor since,—one prayer then might have found its way to the throne of God, as never again. But that word was not spoken,—that prayer was not breathed.' ”

It is not difficult to know when words would be profitless, or worse ; and when we only refrain from them through self-pleasing and want of care to comfort or help our neighbour, for the religious instincts of the conscience will tell us whether we have acted in this matter with a view to God's glory, or not.

It will ever be impossible for us to enter into the height and depth of this prayer of intercession, yet may we not try to catch some faint notes of the harmony, and make them our own ? learning from what He asked for us, His wishes for us, and trying to conform ourselves to them ; such as His petition for unity and love among His members. We know that He has prayed that those given to Him may be

with Him where He is; how can we be fitted for that Presence but by trying here to follow His Will for us, and to *bear* His Will; remembering the path He trod, and that He did not forget to pray for us when so near to His bitter Passion? "Sweet and unearthly harmonies! Words from Him that loved not in word only, but in deed and in truth," in this hour of His last earthly parting and of approaching agony; of parting from those whom He loved as no man yet hath loved: words of melody from the Heaven of Heavens, strains to which we still listen, and as we listen, feel more and more that we understand them not, but love again and again to hear them! Words of Divine Love itself imparted to the world by the "Disciple of love."

Wednesday.

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

*Thou that dwellest in the`gardens, the companions
hearken to Thy voice: cause me to hear it.—CANT.
viii. 13.*

CAUSE us so to hear it, and with such awful reverence to watch with Him one hour, that we may gather something of what He would have us know of His Divine sorrows, and of what they should teach us. Once before the voice of the Lord God was heard, walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and man hid himself, fearing His words of condemnation; but now we may listen with trembling awe indeed, yet still with loving trust and thankfulness to the voice which tells us of the cup of trembling being taken away from us, the doom pronounced on the first Adam fully borne by the Second.

“ O loving wisdom of our God !
When all was sin and shame
A second Adam to the fight
And to the rescue came.

“ O wisest love ! that flesh and blood
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against the foe,
Should strive and should prevail ;

“ And that a higher gift than grace
Should flesh and blood refine,—
God's Presence and His very Self,
And Essence all-divine.”

We cannot exhaust the lessons, the consolations to be drawn from this hour of unspeakable mystery and sorrow. In some ways it seems even more awful than the Cross, for then the struggle of mortal dread seemed passed, the Victim patiently suffering. But now we are permitted to witness that mysterious strife with agony, which all but crushed even Him, to know that "fearfulness and trembling came upon Him, and an horrible dread overwhelmed Him^f." And as we turn from our own sorrows to dwell on His sorrows, we feel how gentle and light are ours, and yet that He knows all their anguish, that He once prayed the Cup might pass from Him, and that He would not hold it to our lips if He could spare it to us. We know that He, like us, longed and sought for human sympathy and comfort, and that it failed Him, that neither did He find any to comfort Him. We do not think enough of the added anguish it must have caused to a heart like His, when "coming to His disciples," casting Himself as it were upon them for help, they were helpless to comfort Him. For we cannot but think that even commonplace words, if lovingly spoken, (and what could be anything but commonplace to Him?) would have comforted Him then from those whom He had taken with Him, chosen to be His comforters. But this burden of disappointed affection and trust He also bore, and if among mere men the most highly gifted and finely organized have also the most

^f Ps. lvi. 5.

capacity for suffering, what must have been His power of suffering? Whatever the most sensitive, tenderest, purest heart can suffer, is but a faint shadow of what His perfect nature felt. And all for us,—for me,—for those who—

“grudge one drop should fall,
Out of their own dull veins for Him Who gave us all.”

“For the hurt of the daughter of My people am I hurt.” He overcame in that garden the powers of evil, which in a garden had overcome the first man; but must we not remember that even His atonement, restoring us to more than the first Adam lost, does not annul the temporal punishment of sin? The penance pronounced on man and woman in Eden is not removed, though “in dim figure mankind, who were exiled from the garden, again return hither. Christ restores to us that which we had lost, but sanctified by His gift and blessed by His own adoption of the same. We have lost our Paradise, our first and happy estate; we have lost the childhood of our years; but in Christ we must return to that Paradise we have lost, we must return once more to lost childhood, and become again as little children in Him. But this Paradise to which we return in Christ is not an Eden of delights, as it was to the first Adam; but a garden of suffering and expiation, where we must watch and pray with the Second Adam.” To us it is still said, “in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread;” and He gathered no wheat into His garner

s Jer. viii. 21.

until He had poured forth His bloody Sweat. Our state is one of forgiveness, but also of penance; the sentence pronounced in the first garden must be borne. But those sufferings which in us could have no merit or satisfaction, He took part in and bore as the doom of man, making perfect satisfaction for us, and teaching us henceforth to bear them, not as a token of anger, but of forgiveness; of the love which, making us partakers of Christ's sufferings, would purify and prepare us to be with Him in bliss. "And even in this dark garden of sadness, Christ, in unspeakable condescension, seems to say it is not good for Him to be alone, but takes the Church to be the partner of His sorrows, saying, 'Come ye apart and watch with Me.'"

To us the Church says the same words now, calls us to prepare to stand at the foot of His Cross by watching with Him through this season of repentance. If He came now, would He find us sleeping, allowing opportunities of grace to be for ever lost, as those who could not watch with Him one hour?

Thursday.

THE BLOODY SWEAT.

*The yoke of My transgressions is bound by His hand :
they are wreathed, and come up upon My neck.—*
LAM. i. 14.

HE, of Whom it was written, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied," wills only to gather in his great harvest as man gathers in his earthly harvest, in the sweat of His Face; yet not as men, in health and wholesome labour, but in an agony which wrung His frame till it poured great drops of blood. That precious blood which man on the next day should shed, is forced from Him now by His mortal anguish. May we not well pray, "By Thine unknown sufferings, good Lord, deliver us." Never on earth shall we know what that anguish was. Whether it were the weight of all the sins of the whole world in all time which all-but overwhelmed Him,—of mine, (O may I not add to their number,) or the shrinking of His soul from the coming agony,—or whether this were a special struggle with the Evil One,—we know not. We know that just before He said, "the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me^b," that when in the beginning of His ministry the enemy having measured his strength

^b St. John xiv. 30.

with the King of glory, and having been utterly vanquished, departed,—it was but for a season,—that now an angel strengthened Him; the only other time that we are told of this angelic ministry being after that first temptation when vexed by the evil angel. It also took place immediately after the Voice from heaven had acknowledged Him as the well-beloved Son; and during this holy week the same Voice had again been heard, accepting His prayer.

Perhaps we may think with reverent awe that this may have been the season for which the tempter waited, and that besides all the burden of our sins, and the knowledge of approaching sufferings, there was now, at the end of His ministry, another awful and mysterious combat with the adversary, so tremendous that He, the Captain of the Lord's Host, the Man of war, "reels in that victorious fight." But He conquers, and we in Him may conquer, even though Satan choose the hour of our bodily weakness and sorest mental anguish to tempt us,—even though then when we most need help, it utterly fail us, and that no visible angel comfort us; if only like Him, being in an agony, we pray more earnestly, instead of, as we are tempted to do, lying silent and crushed, feeling as if even prayer must fail. Whatever our agony, His as far exceeded it as the infinite exceeds the finite. "He bore in its fulness the curse laid on Adam, that in the sweat of his brow he should till the ground, as on the following day He bore the

thorns it was to produce. In both cases did the Second Man bear the curse, not figuratively only, but also literally; and that, too, in a fuller sense than any other child of Adam. For those thorns it produced actually pierced His bleeding temples; and the sweat which He shed was no other than the blood of His agonized heart, which fell upon the ground that had been cursed for Adam's transgression." The earth which shared in the curse of sin is watered by the redeeming and renewing Blood, "for Jesus' sweat is healing dew." Henceforth the corn and wine which it shall produce are made heavenly Food for His people. For "He That spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things¹?"

It was written by a saint of old, "Many turn the sorrows of the Saviour to an argument of inherent weakness from the beginning, rather than taken upon Him for the time. But I am so far from considering it a thing to be excused, that I never more admire His mercy and majesty; for He would have conferred less upon me had He not taken upon Him my feelings. For He took upon Him my sorrow, that upon me He might bestow His joy. With confidence, therefore, I name His sadness, because I preach His Cross. He must needs then have undergone affliction, that He might conquer. For they have no praise of fortitude whose wounds have produced stupor rather

¹ Rom. viii. 32.

than pain. He wished, therefore, to instruct us how we should conquer death, and what is far greater, the anguish of coming death. Thou smartedst then, O Lord, not from Thy own but my wounds, for He was wounded for our transgression. And perhaps He is sad, because that after Adam's fall the passage by which we must depart from this life was such that death was necessary."

"O generous love ! that He Who smote
In man for man the foe,
The double agony in man
For man should undergo.

"And in the garden secretly,
And on the Cross on high,
Should teach His brethren, and inspire
To suffer and to die."

Friday.**THE ARREST.**

When the wicked, even mine enemies, and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.—
Ps. xxvii. 2.

YET this was their hour, and the power of darkness ; for though the spirits of darkness have no power at all unless they can gain our co-operation, they had now effected this ; as, in like manner, the Chief Priests had secured the help of one of Christ's disciples. There is no word spoken by our Lord all through this scene of treachery, in which we may not find food for continual meditation : the first words, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" thus shewing His Omniscience, and yet not indignantly refusing the token, though hypocritical, of affection, if even now this proof of His mingled power and forbearance might move him to repentance. "O great manifestation of divine power, great discipline of virtue ! Both the design of the traitor is detected, and yet forbearance is not withheld. He shews Whom it is Judas betrays, by manifesting things hidden ; He declares Whom he delivers up, by saying, 'the Son of Man,'—for the human flesh, not the Divine nature, is seized. As if He said, 'For thee did I undertake, O ungrateful man, that which

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thou betrayest in hypocrisy.' ” “ See how up to the very last hour He did all things for their amendment, healing, prophesying, threatening.” Then, as the armed band came forward, “ Friend, wherefore art thou come ? ” the last words to him who had been His own familiar friend ; and then the calm advance, as, when knowing all things that should come upon Him, He yet stedfastly “ set His face to go to Jerusalem.” “ So wonderfully do the two circumstances seem to coincide and run parallel together throughout, — that of our Lord’s freely and spontaneously submitting Himself to death, as the great High Priest Who offered up Himself as a perfect sacrifice ; and that of His enemies all taking a part in His death, and laying their hands, as it were, on the head of the victim.” He shewed that when He was weak, then was He strong, by casting His enemies to the ground ; not by “ one rough word,” but by the simple avowal that He was Jesus of Nazareth ; for “ God was latent in that flesh ; and the eternal day was so hidden by the members of that humanity, that it needed to be sought with lanterns and torches, to be put to death by the darkness ! ‘ I am He,’ saith He, and beats down the ungodly. What shall He do when He comes to judge, Who did thus when about to be judged ? What shall be His might when He comes to reign, Who had this might when He was at the point to die ? They in their rage sought to put Him to death ; but He also sought us by dying for us. And therefore, because

when they would hold Him, and could not, He shewed His power, He let them hold Him now, that by means of them, all unwitting, He may do His will." May we not trace in this the rule of His moral dealings with us, of how He would fain not leave us to our own devices, of how He often casts us down when we are bent on sin, though we, alas, too often arise, attributing the hindrance to accident, and go on as though we had received no check? He was bound, that we may be free; He, with His fettered hands, binds the devil, releases us from our sins, and gives us the liberty of the children of God. If we will but stand fast in the liberty wherewith He has made us free! but the same powers of darkness which bound Him, are ever trying to tempt us with false shadows of liberty; trying to make us feel His easy yoke irksome; tempting us with the seeming freedom of self-will, that we may be tied and bound with the chains of our sins, having left the service which is perfect freedom. But they who enter "into the heart and love of the Lamb, find themselves so enthralled, so changed, so transformed, that they verily feel the sweetness emanating from those shackled hands." They desire to say with a saint who refused earthly freedom, that he might preach Christ to his fellow-captives, "O sacred Bonds, O shackled Hands, take pity on this my liberty, bound and shut in from all that relates to Thee. Would that I had never given my heart to aught but Thee! It was not enough for me to separate myself from Thee, and to

make myself the slave of my passions, but I have thanklessly tied and bound those holy Hands, wounding Thee more sorely than did those cruel cords. O Divine Hands, bound for me, imprison these eyes, that they behold not vanity; take captive this wandering heart, that it fix not itself on the many follies which now fill it and separate it from Thee. In and with Thyself, O Divine Love, Thou bindest those who love Thee, Thou enchainest them, Thou winnest them, Thou keepest them fast; they bear about, in earthly vessels, pure minds, transformed into Thee by Thy Presence and Thy Love. He that abideth in Thee, and is in bondage to Thee, what other freedom doth he desire? Make me, at least, the prisoner of Thy Hope, therein alone to live, thereon to rest; that I may look only to Thee, follow only Thee, sigh for Thee, yield myself wholly to Thee, and on Thee alone repose,—my soul's life, my love, and my only Hope."

Saturday.

CHRIST BEFORE ANNAS AND CAIAPHAS.

The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits, of Whom we said, Under His shadow we shall live.—LAMENT. iv. 20.

BOUND by His enemies, and the desertion of His nearest causing the iron to enter into His soul, the Prince of peace is led through the streets of Jerusalem, beginning the weary going to and fro at the will of His captors, which must have so much added to His sufferings ; first, (re-crossing the brook Kedron, and entering Jerusalem,) to the house of Annas, thence sent bound to the palace of Caiaphas; then, after a night spent in enduring the mockery of the high-priest's servants, led before the council of the Sanhedrim,—from thence taken to Pilate's judgment-hall,—by him sent to Herod,—sent back by Herod to Pilate,—all this before the last weary journey, when “the very torturers paused to help Him on His way.” We do not often consider these goings to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem as one of our Lord's sufferings, because they are, as it were, thrown into the shade by His greater agonies ; and yet how must they not have told in suffering on a frame worn with the agony and Bloody Sweat, with a night of unrest and buffetings? Six such journeyings, at least, we are told of,—seven, if

the council of the Sanhedrim was not held in the house of Caiaphas.

To Annas,—to Caiaphas,—to the Sanhedrim,—to Pilate,—to Herod,—again to Pilate,—the seventh and last journey to Calvary. No alleviation, no comfort, all through; He sees His friend only to hear him deny Him with oaths and curses. Surrounded by those who were thirsting for His blood, He is content to be dragged hither and thither at their will, expiating the many times that we go on our own way with no thought of what He would have us do, seeking only our own pleasure, or it may be going on sinful errands; taking these as all other sins upon Him, as if they were His own, and saying, “the yoke of My transgression is bound by His hand: they are wreathed and come upon My neck; He hath made My strength to fall; the Lord hath delivered Me into their hands^k.” “He hath hedged Me about that I cannot get out; He hath made My chain heavy^l.” “He weakened My strength in the way^m.” And we, if like Him we are called on to tread weary paths, count it strange. We think if we walk for a little time along painful roads that soon we must come to pleasant paths. But if, as so often is ordered for us, one sorrow is but the beginning* of many, may we not gain patience from the thought of the repeated and continual suffering of our Lord, no “hour of rest before the grave,” granted to Him? And all for us;

^k Lam. i. 14.

^l Ibid. iii. 7.

^m Ps. cii. 23.

for "although it ill became our Lord to be brought before tribunals and councils, yet He willed to submit to that affront and affliction, to the intent that His doctrine and life might undergo the most rigorous ordeal; and that it might be notorious to all mankind that He was, in all things, so holy, pure, and perfect, that not even the utmost extent of that malice, which seemed in these men to be indeed hellish, could find a blemish in Him; and that we, by means of His very adversaries, might be the more confirmed in the truth."

FOURTH WEEK IN LENT.

Monday.

THE DENIALS OF ST. PETER.

*Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy : when I fall,
I shall arise.*—MICAH vii. 8.

THE accounts of the four Evangelists, taken together, seem to tell us that after his first denial, in answer to the maid who kept the door, St. Peter left his place by the fire and went out into the porch, perhaps to escape from the light, lest he should be recognised by others. It may, perhaps, have been while he was gone out, that another maid expressed her certainty that he was one of Christ's followers; for while both SS. Matthew and Mark speak of "another maid"^a before the second denial, St. Luke mentions that it was made to a man; and St. John, that it was in answer to several, "they said therefore unto him"^b.

But neither of the first Evangelists say that the "other maid" addressed St. Peter, but that she 'began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them.' When St. Peter returned, and again stood by

^a St. Matt. xxvi. 71; St. Mark xiv. 69. ^b St. John xviii. 25.

the fire, (as by comparing St. Mark's account and St. John's, we see that he did before the second denial,) it is, therefore, natural to suppose that one, a man (St. Luke), and others with him (St. John), should have charged him with what they had heard from the maid. It has been remarked that this is the only time where we are told of any woman taking part with the enemies of our Lord, and no woman is mentioned in the Gospels "as speaking against Him in His life, or having a share in His death." Even a heathen woman intercedes for His life with Pilate, while faithful women surround Him with their love from His Incarnation to His Ascension, ministering to Him in life, last at His grave, first at His resurrection.

After the second denial, it may be that St. Peter withdrew himself again from the light of the fire, for we are told that "after a while *came unto him* they that stood by^c," and this time it was his manner of speech which betrayed him. SS. Matthew and Mark both speak of those who made the charge in the plural number ; St. Luke mentions "another confidently affirming^d;" and St. John that a kinsman of Malchus asked, "Did I not see thee in the garden with Him^e?" The four accounts, taken together, describing a scene where several join in asserting the same thing, and individuals bring special circumstances in proof.

"Behold, that most firm pillar, touched but by one

^c St. Matt. xxvi. 73.

^d St. Luke xxii. 59.

^e St. John xviii. 26.

breath of air, trembles all over. How many since then, how many, even boys and girls, have been able to confess Christ, and what an innumerable fellowship of holy martyrs, courageously and with violence, hath entered the kingdom of heaven, which thing at that time he was not able to do, who received the keys of that kingdom."

If we think it almost incredible that one like St. Peter should have changed so utterly in so short a time from protestations of love and fidelity, truly felt, to denials of his Master, to oaths and cursing; may we not sadly remember that it is but too like our own ways, the difference in our frame of mind when at our prayers, communing with God, and through the day, if the temptation comes not to live as we have prayed? But though we may forget Christ, He does not forget us. "The Master hath not lost sight of His disciple;" but though a prisoner, and bound, "took great forethought for His disciple, raising Peter up when he was down, by His look, and launching him into a sea of tears;" perhaps permitting him to fall, "in order that he might be the less severe to sinners, from the remembrance of his own fall." "It might not be that he on whom the Light of the world had looked should continue in the darkness of denial, wherefore, 'he went out and wept bitterly.' Blessed tears! O holy Apostle; the right hand of the Lord Jesus Christ was with thee to hold thee up before thou wast quite thrown down, and in the midst

of thy perilous fall, thou receivedst strength to stand. The Rock quickly returned to its stability, recovering to great fortitude, that he who in Christ's passion had quailed, should endure his own subsequent suffering with fearlessness and constancy."

Tuesday.

THE NIGHT IN CAIAPHAS' PALACE.

O Lord, Thou hast seen my wrong: judge Thou my cause. Behold their sitting down, and their rising up; I am their musick.—LAM. iii. 59, 63.

THE Lord, the Hope of Israel, was among them,—in His own High-Priest's house, where He might have looked for justice, for protection against the plots of His enemies; but the gold had become dim; “the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold,” had become “as earthen pitchers,” affording no protection to the innocent, broken in pieces themselves by their own injustice. As in His temple, so now in the palace of him who bore God's commission, He is rejected, condemned, abused. His examination before Caiaphas may have been a long one, for we are told that about an hour intervened between the second and the third denial of St. Peter; and St. John mingles the narrative of the denials and examination, as though they were passing at the same time; and the “*many* false witnesses,” sought for, seems to imply some length of time, as well as St. Mathew's expression, “At the last came two false witnesses.”

We may follow, in sorrowful and adoring love, the whole scene as far as it has been told to us;

‘ Lam. iv. 2.

the first questioning of the High-Priest as to His disciples and His doctrine;—our Lord's calm appeal to His life, as when He said, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?"—the blow given with reproachful words,—the transcendent meekness of His reply,—the many sought for to bear witness against that spotless life to which He had appealed,—many false witnesses coming,—their charges against Him utterly breaking down,—two at least giving false testimony both as to His exact words, and as to their meaning,—our Lord's silence,—the High-Priest's evident surprise as he arose and said to Him, "answerest Thou nothing?"—Jesus still holding His peace,—His look on St. Peter,—the High-Priest's adjuration, when, putting aside all minor charges, he comes at once to the real matter, our Lord's claim to be God of God, One with the Father,—the silence of Jesus broken by this appeal in the Name of the living God,—His acknowledgment of His Deity, and prophecy of the day when His enemies should be made His footstool,—the High-Priest with rent robes declaring He had spoken blasphemy,—the condemnation to death,—the buffetings and mockery of the servants, to whom He seems to have been given over till morning. This was the night spent by Him in preparation for His sufferings on the next day; everything teaching us,—both His silence, and His words. Silent, when His own justification was concerned, "the silence of Christ expiating the defence

• St. John viii. 46.

or excuses of Adam;" "the silence of the eternal Word confounding the pride of the sons of Adam, who are always eager to justify themselves." He seems to say, "Thou shalt answer for Me, O Lord My God ^b,"— keeps silence even from good words, but teaches us when we ought to speak, that is, when God's honour is concerned. He does not notice the many false charges concerning which it would have been useless to justify Himself, but at once acknowledges the one great charge which was true, though He knew that it would cause His death.

O perfectest and calmest courage! giving us the example that, putting the thought of consequences aside, we should constantly witness for Thy truth; comforting us with the hope that the very apparent overthrow of truth which such boldness may cause, shall be but the prelude to its final victory, even as the triumph of His enemies was the beginning of their destruction; since "the High-Priest, in rending His garments, acted a real and deep tragedy for himself, for he thus declared that the order of Levi, the Jewish priesthood, was rent, and even now no more."

"This rended garment stands in contrast with our Lord's imperishable robe," and also "in contrast with the rended veil of the Temple. For the Priest's garment was rent by his own hands: the veil of the Temple was rent by supernatural and Divine means, at our Lord's death, and the hearing of His dying

^b Ps. xxxviii. 15, P.-B.V.

voice. For the opening of the sanctuary of God, the rending of the veil into the Holy of Holies, was the doing of God alone; no man had a share in this: man may rend and destroy; he cannot restore, nor open heaven." "The Evangelist recounts circumstantially all those particulars even which seem most disgraceful, hiding or extenuating nothing, but thinking it the highest glory that the Lord of the earth should endure such things for us. This let us read continually, let us imprint in our minds, and in these things let us boast."

Wednesday.

CHRIST BEFORE PILATE.

Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed.—DAN. vi. 13.

WE are not told how long the council of the Sanhedrim, held when the morning had come, lasted, we are only told that they bound Jesus and led Him away to Pilate. The special sin which He had ever tried to bring home to the conscience of the Scribes and Pharisees was their hypocrisy, their regard for formal outward observance, while neglecting truth and justice; and now they give the greatest proof of the truth of this charge, which seems most to have exasperated them against Christ, for with "hands full of blood"¹ they will not enter into the hall of the uncircumcised, hoping to keep themselves pure to eat the Passover. "They feared to be defiled by the prætorium of an alien judge, and feared not to be defiled by the blood of an innocent brother." They revere the shadow, while seeking to destroy the reality. If this self-deceit were only found amongst those unconverted to Christ it would be less astonishing,

¹ Isa. i. 15.

but has it not been often the very root of the history of the Christian Church in all ages? of individual Christians, "something else substituted for the keeping of the heart?" Has it not been so with us? with myself? we should, for instance, be shocked at omitting the act of saying our prayers morning and evening, or of behaving outwardly irreverently in church, and yet how little do we think of inward irreverence by wandering of heart. Is it not our temptation, who outwardly adhere to religion, to fall into a way of satisfying ourselves with formal actions, and so to be often less alive to realities of goodness than those who profess less? as we find that the Gentile judge was the only one amongst those before whom Christ was brought who tried to save Him, and acknowledged His innocence. He takes Him apart, "suspecting something great concerning Him, and wishing, without being troubled by the Jews, to learn all accurately." The charge against Him is changed, it is no longer that He claimed to be Son of God, but that He said He Himself was Christ a King. It seems strange that after our Lord had acknowledged His kingly office, the Roman governor should, as St. Luke tells us, have declared to the people, "I find no fault in Him." But St. John fills up the narrative, and tells us of Pilate's conversation with Jesus, when he returned to the hall after hearing the first accusation of the multitude outside; and that after this conversation, (of which the three first Evan-

gelists only tell us the one question, "Art Thou the King of the Jews," and its answer), he went again to the people without, and said, as both St. Luke and St. John relate, "I find no fault in Him." For our Lord had deigned to address Himself to the little spark of good in the Gentile's heart, and he knew that the accusation, though it was one of all others which he would fear to refuse to entertain, was utterly frivolous. "He leadeth upwards Pilate, who was not a very wicked man, nor after their fashion, and desireth to shew that He is not a mere man, but God, and the Son of God. He undoeth that which Pilate for a while had feared, namely, the suspicion of seizing kingly power." Then we seem to hear the manifold and angry accusations of the priests and elders, "the more fierce" that they began to fear lest they should be baulked of their prey; our Lord's silence, Pilate's appeal to Him, "answerest Thou nothing?" and still that majestic silence; so that the governor marvelled greatly, having felt the power of His words, and not knowing that He Who would speak to save his soul will not speak so as to force him to release Him, but having convinced him of His innocence, leaves to him, as to each of us, the awful choice between good and evil. And to His followers in all times He furnishes example and comfort under the trial of seeing the wicked prevail; teaching them, when counsels opposite to Him are successful, to bear even that patiently, "understanding that God in this matter does not

require that particular service at their hands, which they desired to offer, but another, very different, in which He the more glories, which is silence and patient endurance and humility. At such a time let him leave his own honour to God's care, and not concern himself about it, understanding that it is His will that he should lose it; and let him leave in God's hands His own divine honour, for He will surely bring it forth victorious; and let him only take heed to imitate Him in all humility."

Thursday.

CHRIST REJECTED FOR BARABBAS.

Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.—JER. ii. 11.

Is there not a lesson for us in the more than failure of all the devices which Pilate imagined with the hope of satisfying both his conscience and the people? the lesson that if we leave the straight path of right doing, the by-paths which we take, hoping without self-sacrifice or inconvenience to arrive at the right end, will not only entirely fail in this object, but will add to the evils which we hoped to escape. Pilate sent our Lord to Herod, thinking to shift the responsibility of the judgment on him; it did but add to the mockery and insults heaped on the Prisoner Whom he knew to be innocent: he was fain to use the custom of one being released at the feast, to save our Lord, and yet, as a concession to popular feeling, to treat Him as guilty,—the only result was that a murderer was preferred before Christ; he then tried to satisfy His enemies by inflicting a lesser punishment than death—it did not save Him from the cross, but added to it the extreme indignity and torture of the scourging. We may reject Christ openly, as the chief priests did;

or as truly reject Him, like Pilate, while seeming to take His part, and knowing the good sufficiently to desire to hide from ourselves what we are doing—to put it down to necessity, overwhelming circumstances, &c. Yet any departure from the path of right doing is a choosing of something before Christ, with whatever excuses it may be covered, in order to secure our own convenience, ease, pleasure, &c., or even what may seem the good of others. We may perhaps say to ourselves that our influence for good will be lost if we speak the truth too plainly; that by yielding much good we may save some, when we are really giving place to cowardice, and rejecting Him for the sake of something as unworthy to compare with Him as Barabbas was. For nothing has any worth or goodness except what flows from Him, and that which is chosen instead of Him is utterly worthless. What may seem to us great choices do not often come in our lives, but when they do they will be influenced by the little choices which we continually make. Should I not think every night whether in some little thing I have not preferred my own will or pleasure to what I knew to be right? I may not have thought much of it, and probably Pilate did not think it much that “suffered under Pontius Pilate” should then be said of his Galilean prisoner; he did not know Who He was, and, having tried many ways to deliver Him, thought less of giving up a poor and lowly, though innocent Jew, to His enemies, than of

giving occasion for a tumult, especially at the time of the Feast,—or possible insurrection,—for the accusation that he was not Cæsar's friend. "When the conscience is moved, and purposes of good are formed, it is the usual mode of God's moral Providence to allow temptations of self-interest or fear to occur, in order to try the sincerity of such resolutions." And if we fail in daily small trials, shall we not be likely in greater things to yield to popular outcry that which might have been saved for Christ and His Church,—which might have brought blessing to thousands unborn, even if we do not wholly part with Him and with His truth? It was so with Pilate now, yielding to the fear of an appeal to the Roman Emperor; but "the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness^k:" all ways of seeking for strength, and peace, and protection, excepting in God, are the ways that lead us furthest from them. This we see in our very moral nature, and in the very history of the soul of man, when it makes anything else its choice but God alone; it is not only punished thereby, but the very object which it wishes to avoid becomes its punishment. He who did not dare to be unpopular is everywhere spoken against, having missed the glory of standing alone for the right against strong temporary pressure; while the history of Christendom is radiant with examples of that courage made perfect through grace, that noble daring, without which

^k Prov. xi. 5.

nothing great was ever accomplished for the Church ; not in martyrs only, but in those also whose wisdom was in their own day counted madness, although as later ages perceived, they spake but the words of truth and soberness.

“ How sleep the brave, who sink to rest,
By all their country's wishes blest !
By ' angel ' hands their knell is rung ;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung ;
There Honour comes, a pilgrim pale
To bless the turf that wraps their clay ; ”

may be as truly said of the soldiers of the cross as of men who have faithfully fought under an earthly banner. “ The Lord is a man of war.” Do we, do I, think enough of the absolute need there is that each of His soldiers should be brave ? of the dreadfulfulness and subtilty of the sin of cowardice ? Do I not shrink at times from avowing fully the belief which might offend others ? If we only dare to express truths which are accepted popularly, and bear but faint witness—or none at all—to those which happen at any time to be unpopular in some part of the Church, should we have made any stand at all for the way of Christ in the days when it was everywhere spoken against ?

Friday.

THE SCOURGING.

The covering of it of purple.—CANT. iii. 10.

This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.—GEN. xxxvii. 32.

THE greatness of this special torture and shame borne by our Lord for us, is noted by its being made a distinct subject of prophecy: "I gave My back to the smiters¹." It is also one of the few out of those "many things" which He should suffer, of which He makes special mention in foretelling His Passion. On three different occasions, St. Mark tells us that He taught them how He must suffer many things; but the last time, as they were going up to Jerusalem, He tells them particulars of those coming sufferings; as though He would try and save them from the sin of being offended because of Him, by preparing them for the indignities which they must see Him endure. He tells them plainly that He should be betrayed to the chief priests and scribes, condemned to death, delivered to the Gentiles, mocked, scourged, spitted upon, killed. We cannot but reverently think that those things which He singled out from His unknown sufferings to foretel, had a very special bitterness or agony. We scarcely dare to contemplate or speak of this suffering, for the depths of humiliation and anguish which it

¹ Isa. l. 6.

reveals are ineffable. Other circumstances are told with detail by the Evangelists, but it almost seems as if they were inspired with an awful dread in mentioning this infliction, which allows them only to tell the simple fact.

St. Luke, who in recording the scourging of Paul and Silas, says, "they laid many stripes upon them," does not tell us that our Lord was scourged, but only of the compromise proposed by Pilate, "I will therefore chastise Him, and release Him." St. Matthew and St. Mark only allude to it in the words "when they had scourged Him." St. John fixes for us the time when it took place; after the first interrogation by Pilate, but before the condemnation to death. We know, indeed^m, that it was a last unworthy attempt on Pilate's part to escape from the pressure put upon him to inflict death. He appeals to the people to release Him,—first, as innocent, as found faultless both by him and Herod,—then, as an act of grace at the Passover, and when Barabbas is chosen as the favoured one, St. John tells us "*then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged Him;*" hoping doubtless, as his after appeals shew, that "beholding the Man," "bruised for our iniquities," they would consider Him already sufficiently punished. But to Him it only brought additional agony and shame, although it opens to us a fresh fountain of His merits, and of strength which we may make our own.

^m See St. Luke xxiii. 16.

Only may we remember, when "shielded from any assault of the devil, that the covering is of purple indeed. It cost the King Whom we serve, the Lord Whom we love, all those purple drops which He shed forth in His agony in the garden, all those which He shed forth in His scourging, the purple that dyed His head from the crown of thorns, the purple from the five wounds—the five smooth stones wherewith the spiritual Goliath was slain. Our covering, but His agony; our shelter, but it cost Him His earthly life. This Rock could not give out its healing waters, unless it were smitten—this true Pelican could not feed its young ones save with its own blood."

He who willed that in a few years His faithful martyrs should have the agony and glory of deep sufferings for Him, would shrink from nothing which they might have to bear; and beholding Him, the weakest and most delicate found strength to endure utmost shame and the torture of stripes. "Ah me! God is stretched out before man! and He in Whom not one trace of sin can be discerned, suffers punishment as a malefactor. His sacred Body was all one wound for our sakes, because there is no part of our body but which ministers to sin." Now is fulfilled that which Thou spakest by Thy prophet, "there is no whole part in My Body". No whole part in Thy Body, O my Saviour, Which alone of all the seed of Adam was perfectly pure; because in us, "from the sole of the foot even unto the

• Ps. xxxviii. 7, P.-B.V.

head there is no soundness^o.” How shall we, Thy members, indulge our body to the full, even in lawful things, far less, if by indulging it we sin against Thee? Shall we not pray especially at this time, that we who are chastened by abstinence, may also be gladdened by the same holy devotion, so that our carnal affections being subdued, we may the more easily rise to heavenly desires? For we are His Body—the Body which He would win to Himself, by giving His own Flesh to utter suffering. “Our sins are as scarlet,” they are “red like crimson;” and scarlet and crimson is the robe which He wears, namely, our sins. He wears our sins, in order that we may wear His righteousness. He wears them red as crimson, but shall make them by His wearing white as snow; for He shall cast this aside, and His sacred Body shall be clothed with His own garment. For this garment is that with which He will clothe us, who are His Body; and His raiment is “shining and white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them^p.” For it is said of His redeemed, that they have washed their robes, and “made them white in the blood of the Lamb^q.” And His promise is,—“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool^r.”

^o Isa. i. 6.^p St. Mark ix. 3.^q Rev. vii. 14.^r Isa. i. 18.

Saturday.

THE MOCKERY OF THE GENTILE SOLDIERS.

All nations shall do Him service.—Ps. lxxii. 11.

THIS is His Coronation-day, crowned, though in mockery, by the Gentiles, whose kings should soon minister unto Him, bringing their silver and their gold with them. He had withdrawn Himself when the people would have made Him a King; now they had disowned Him as their King, and He accepts the crown of thorns which the Gentiles offer. He, the King of martyrs, first wears the crown which all His martyrs must in some sort wear before they receive the crown of gold; He wears the purple robe of martyrdom. There is no rest allowed to Him, no pause in His sufferings. "Then," when they had scourged Him, the soldiers take Him into the common hall, and gather unto Him the whole band of soldiers; then first were "the forces of the Gentiles" brought unto Him. For "the kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed; which indeed is the least of all seeds," and all the mysteries which were the beginning of the glories which shall fill heaven and earth were done in silence, in stillness, in apparent weak-

• Isa. lx. 11.

• St. Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

ness. "Thus did the kingdom which was not of this world overcome the proud world, not with fierceness of fighting, but with lowliness of suffering: thus was that grain of wheat to be multiplied, sown in horrible disgrace, to sprout forth in marvellous glory." Yet "never in kingly robe, and imperial crown, and sovereign sceptre, were such glory, and such majesty, and such strength, as were in these." "His robe, and crown, and sceptre, are not weakness, as they appear, but strong in that strength which overcometh the world."

He, Who had given His whole Body to be smitten for the transgression of His people, now gives His sacred Head to be pierced with the thorny crown; He allows the soldiers to use His sceptre, the reed, to press it down upon His brows, while others smite Him with their hands. He, by Whom all things were made, and Who in the beginning had made the earth bring forth all good things, now, as man, bears the penalty, "thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to Thee". The second Adam reaps the fruit of that which the first Adam planted, yet, thus accepting the thorns which were all that He found in His vineyard, "His blessing on earth's primal bower" is renewed. He does not take away the penance given to Adam, and which all his children must bear; but bearing it Himself, He sanctifies it, and takes away its bitter-

^u Gen. iii. 18.

ness, that we, "keeping stedfastly in our mind the King of the whole earth, and Lord of angels, bearing all these contumelies in silence, may imitate His example." The thorns of the earth having been bathed in His blood, are more precious than its flowers, and bear nobler fruit, if only with Him we will patiently bear our thorny crown. For He Who doth not afflict willingly knows that only pain can cure the wounds of sin, as His pain only can atone for that sin. As one of old has written, "Since the earth was polluted with blood; and thorns were springing up on all sides on account of the curse; and the devil having the handwriting against us, had us in his power, and tyrannized over us: on this account, the Lord, in spoiling him of all things, when He went forth to death, clothed Himself with these, to shew that His victory over death was for our salvation. He bore the blood in the scarlet robe; the thorns in the crown; the handwriting against us in the reed, wherewith the devil had written down that charge against us: in order that, together with death, He might abolish these things, and cleanse the creation from them: and instead of the thorns, might bestow on us the tree of life; instead of the crime of blood, might, by His own blood, wash the earth and us all, and instead of the curse might hereafter bless those that are on the earth, saying, 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the

earth².’ If sorrow follows upon sorrow, give us patience, O Divine Lord of sorrows; let us never feel as though it were enough, but remembering Thy sorrows all through that night may we possess our souls in patience.”

² St. Matt. v. 5.

FIFTH WEEK IN LENT.

Monday.

BEHOLD THE MAN.

*I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of
His wrath.*—LAM. iii. 1.

ST. JOHN only tells us of this last appeal of Pilate to the mercy of the Jews. Both SS. Matthew and Mark tell us that “when they had mocked” Jesus, they put His own raiment on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him ; but St. John relates the intervening circumstances while He still wore, though in mockery, the scarlet and purple robes of royalty and of martyrdom. Perhaps we may think that as St. John had followed Him into the High-Priest’s palace, and as he stood by the Cross, so he remained throughout the Passion as near as he could to Him Whom he loved, and that though he could not gain admittance into the Gentile hall of judgment, yet that he was without amongst the crowd, and beheld our Lord when He was led forth by Pilate. “Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe.” It is hard to read these words and not to think that

they are those of one who had looked upon that sight, and who had received the image of his suffering Lord with such vividness into his soul, that he is able in these fewest words to convey to us the awful picture of what he then beheld; and all the account of our Lord's trial in St. John's Gospel gives us the impression of having been written by one who had watched its various stages himself.

Now, after the scourging, the ill-treatment, the injustice, which Pilate had inflicted on Jesus, he yet again testifies that He is perfectly innocent. "Behold the Man whom ye accuse of desiring to be a King, behold Him, not bright with imperial glory, but covered with reproach, in such utter abasement, contempt, and suffering, as may satisfy you, and know that I find Him wholly guiltless, both of the charge brought against Him, and of every other. I find no fault in Him." He calls Jesus no longer "the King of the Jews," but "the Man." "If upon the King ye look with an evil eye, now spare Him because ye see Him cast down. Behold the Form marred more than any man's." But his appeal is in vain; the people, His own nation and kindred, look indeed upon Him, the glory of His people; they beheld the Star which had come out of Jacob, the Sceptre which had arisen out of Israel, but they then only looked upon Him to their condemnation,—they beheld Him and found no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. O awful lesson for me, for all to whom in His Church He is now set

forth as Man and God, lest we behold Him with careless or unloving eyes, behold Him not as the penitent thief but as the Jews did. For "here at length is the divine idea of humanity; the one man, about whom if we believe anything, we must believe that His life is normal and regulative for the lives of all other men."

But our life and actions may as truly "cry out against Him," as the voices of the chief priests and officers. Pilate's answer seems as if he were struck with horror and anger at their hardness of heart. "Take *ye* Him and crucify Him;" but even then he repeats his conviction of His innocence, "for I find no fault in Him." The Jews seem, after this last declaration of Pilate, to have abandoned the accusation first made to him against Jesus, that He said He was Christ, a King; the charge most likely to be entertained against Him by the representative of Cæsar, is by him declared futile, and they return to the old ground of complaint on which Caiaphas had condemned Him,—that He made Himself the Son of God. All the false witness, the vehement accusations fall away from Him; and this only at the last can be said of Him,—that "He ought to die because He made Himself the Son of God *." He dies because He says the truth of Himself,—dies, witnessing the same truth for which His faithful martyrs suffered, that Christ the Son of Mary, was also God. And the chief priests bore testimony to the truth in spite of themselves, for

* St. John xix. 7.

“indeed according to their law, He needs must die : for the whole of their law is nothing else but a testimony to the Son of God, and that He needs must die.”

Behold the man ! fairer than the sons of men, yet Very Man,—the only Man in Whom God is perfectly satisfied,—the Man Who can of right plead for humanity,—Who, taking not on Him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham,—has perfectly fulfilled all for which man was created ; by His patience in suffering making satisfaction for our impatience and murmurings,—enduring all which was the reward of His well-doing, to make satisfaction for the sinful pleasures which we purchase by ill-doing,—by His “Lo I come to do Thy Will,” making satisfaction for our wilfulness and disobedience. Beholding the Man, God sees at length One in Whom He is well-pleased,—One Who satisfies all His desire for our perfection. Behold the Man ! He has ascended up on high, claiming gifts for His brethren : “His right hand and His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory^b.” He has won the right to restore to humanity what it had forfeited, since He presents Himself a Perfect Man, the Flower of our race, to make satisfaction for the sins of men.

Let us, let me take the words of Pilate, and come into the presence of the Lord, and say, “Behold the Man !” “Look upon the Face of Thine Anointed^c.” Look not upon me, but upon Him on Whom Thou hast

^b Ps. xcvi. 1.

^c Ibid. lxxxiv. 7.

laid mine iniquity. Behold Him, Man at thy right hand, ever offering for man the sufferings and death which He has commanded us to shew forth on earth, joining our commemoration with His, as we plead the sacrifice which He offers for us on high. Thou sayest to us, "This is My beloved Son, behold Him, receive Him, hear Him, love Him, imitate Him. In Him I give thee all My treasures, a remedy for all thy wants, deliverance in all thy afflictions, satisfaction for all that thou owest to Me, the Mediator of all thy prayers, a treasury of every good thou canst desire."

"Beholding Him, we may be transformed into His image and likeness; worshipping Him, we may be delivered from every false worship; believing on Him, we may receive power to become all which sons of God, that name which we have borne from our baptisms, involves."

Tuesday.

THE CONDEMNATION TO DEATH.

*Mine heritage is unto Me as a lion in the forest ; it
crieth out against Me.*—JER. xii. 8.

HE of Whom it is written, "God shall come, and shall not keep silence^d," is now, as "a man that heareth not^e." We are told that He was silent before the Chief Priest,—before the Jewish Council,—before Herod; and once, earlier in the trial before Pilate, it is written by St. Matthew, that "He answered him to never a word^f." Now, for the fifth time, we read of the awful silence of Jesus,—“when He answered not, silent as the sheep; when He answered, teaching as the Shepherd.” Pilate was the more afraid, when he hears that his prisoner claims to be Son of God. He doubtless feared before, felt that He Who stood before him was not as other men, and now he asks Him, “Whence art Thou?” More than a year before, at the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jews had said, “When Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is^g,” and He, not as now, silent, had cried in the temple, “Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am: He that sent Me is true, Whom ye

^d Ps. l. 3.

^e Ibid. xxxviii. 14.

^f St. Matt. xxvii. 14.

^g St. John vii. 27.

know not^h.” “That is to say, ‘Ye both know Me, and know Me not; ye both know Me, and whence I am ye know,’—in regard of the flesh and shape of man which He bore, but not in respect of the Godhead.—‘And I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, Whom ye know not;’ howbeit, ‘that ye may know Him, believe on Him Whom He sent, and ye will knowⁱ.’”

It was concerning His Godhead that Pilate enquired, but no man “knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him^k,” and the time was past when He had graciously answered Pilate, and tried to lead him to the truth. “For he ought to have resisted, and rescued Him, instead of which He had yielded to the fury of the Jews. Wherefore seeing that he asked questions without object, He answers him no more.” He answers not, and when Pilate speaks to Him sternly as one having authority, He opens His lips for the last time to remind him whence that authority comes, and of the sin for which he will have to give account. “From thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him,” (i.e. to this intent, that he might not have sin by putting to death an innocent man); Him to Whom he had preferred Barabbas, Whom he had scourged, given over to the mockery of the soldiers, led forth crowned and bleeding. The Jews again shift their ground of complaint, perceiving that our Lord’s claim to

^h St. John vii. 28.ⁱ Ibid. viii. 19.^k St. Matt. xi. 27.

Divinity does not weigh against Him with the Roman Governor, but rather increases his awe of the prisoner. "Pilate was afraid, not of violating their law by sparing Him, but of killing the Son of God, in killing Him." They return to the charge which they knew he would most fear to dismiss as groundless, since "whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar," and "he could not treat his master Cæsar with the same contempt with which he treated the law of a foreign nation." Yet not immediately did Pilate yield to the threat, "if thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend ;" our Lord's words during his first interrogation seem to have convinced him fully that His kingdom was indeed not of this world, and he tries once more to persuade the Jews to save Him. He had been taken back into the judgment-hall, and now Pilate brings Him forth again, removes also from the inner to an outer tribunal, and again presents Jesus to His nation, saying, "Behold your King." Perhaps it was when he was set down on this judgment-seat that he received the last warning in the message from his wife which might have saved him; it may have influenced him for the moment to disregard the threat of disloyalty, and present our Lord as the King Whom they should serve, even answering the cry of "Away with Him, crucify Him," by the question, "Shall I crucify your King?" But now the nation and Church to which our Lord had come, finally reject Him by the words of their chief

rulers, "We have no king but Cæsar." "They would not receive the Prince of Peace, riding on an ass in His gentle coming; when the babes sang of His Advent in the Temple, and the Prophet bade them rejoice, saying, 'Rejoice greatly, thou daughter of Sion, behold, thy King cometh.' Therefore in great mourning they shall receive their own chosen Cæsar, coming with his army and unparalleled destruction." As Moses had forewarned them that if they would not serve God with "joyfulness and with gladness of heart," they should "serve their enemies which the Lord should send against them, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: that He should put a yoke of iron upon their neck, until He had destroyed them¹." They have their way at last; Pilate yields; "then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified," though still to the last witnessing to His innocence, washing his hands before them, declaring himself free from the Blood of the just Person; perhaps thus even to the very last trying to reconcile his duty with his fears, hoping thus to satisfy the charge of his wife, "have thou nothing to do with that just Man." "The judge, then, who is thus compelled to give sentence against the Lord, does not convict the accused, but the accusers, pronouncing innocent Him Who is to be crucified." And then the "whole people join with their chief priests, and accept the guilt of His Blood for themselves and for their

¹ Deut. xxviii. 48, 49.

children." They were about to mark their door-posts with the blood of the typical lamb, but the Blood of the true Paschal Lamb they seek, not for cleansing, but for condemnation. Are there many things for which we ought more to pray than that we may not be left to have our own way? for which we ought more to thank God than that He has not granted us our own choice? "What shall I say, O Lord, when I see Thee, for my sake, delivered up to the perverse will of Thine enemies, and yet hold back from committing myself, without reserve, to Thy most holy will?"

Wednesday.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son ; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife ; and they went both of them together.—GEN. xxii. 6.

THE last and most solemn days of Lent are near ; shall we not try, by following our Lord along His Way of Sorrows, to prepare ourselves for standing by His Cross, learning something more each year of what that Cross is to us and for us ? All the Evangelists use the same expression in relating what followed after Pilate had delivered Jesus to the will of His enemies, “they led Him away ;” as it was written, “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.” Both these sentences convey the impression of our Lord being bound and led captive by chains or cords. “O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest Thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save ?” His Feet trod that path of pain because our feet have been swift to tread paths of sin ; He was led captive at the will of His enemies because we have followed our own self-willed choice, not walking in His ways and taking His easy yoke and light burden on us, but seeking our own

“ Isa. liii. 7.

“ Jer. xiv. 8, 9.

pleasure and profit, even when we knew it would involve some neglect of what was most for His glory.

They took off from Him the purple robes, putting on Him His own seamless raiment, and then, as Abraham had laid the wood of the burnt-offering on Isaac, they lay upon His shoulders the wood of the Cross. "As a victim of God, He carries the wood for His sacrifice; as a Conqueror, the arms with which He is to conquer the world; as a King, the sceptre with which He is to rule His people." For it had been written of Him, "the government shall be on His shoulder °," and "the key of the house of David will I lay upon His shoulder^p." He bears it, as the Levite bore the ark on his shoulders, "for this Cross is the ark of our salvation." "Christ therefore bearing His Cross, already as a conqueror, carried His trophies. The Cross is laid upon His shoulders, because, whether Simon or Himself bore it, both Christ bore it in the man, and the man in Christ." "For of that candle which was to be lighted and not to be put under a bushel, the Lord bore the candlestick." And bearing it, He would still teach us. Holy Scripture tells us of two incidents on that mournful journey,—the meeting with Simon of Cyrene, and His words to the daughters of Jerusalem. St. John tells us that He went forth "bearing His Cross;" the other three Evangelists all relate that it was laid upon the Cyrenian. Our Lord must have borne it part of the

° Isa. ix. 6.

^p Ibid. xxii. 22.

way, for we are told that it was "as they came out," perhaps at the gate of the city, that they met Simon, coming out of the country. We cannot think, from the rest of the narrative, that anything but His utter inability to bear it any farther would have moved His enemies to give Him even this relief. But now His disciples see in mysterious living parable the lesson which He had often tried to teach them, that whosoever would be His disciple, must take up his cross and follow Him. And the enthusiasm which He kindled in His followers, the "awful charm" "cast o'er hope and memory, o'er life and death" by His Cross, had surely its root in this, that whatsoever He taught in word, He taught far more in action. "I have given you an example¹." Only He could say that He had done so with perfectness, but it is the source of all influence for good along His dazzling way, among those of earth's gems, who catching His fire have shone as lights in the world. To *be* good more than to do good has been the best teaching, or rather to be good *will* do most good. So in action, "strong when He is weak," He "sets forth this mystery, that He Himself first of all lifts the Cross on Himself, and then delivers it to His members to lift. It is not a Jew who bears the Cross, but a stranger and a foreigner." We think of the blessedness of Simon thus allowed to bear the Cross after Jesus, "filling up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ²;"

¹ St. John xiii. 15.² Col. i. 24.

and yet how often we—each of us, I—shrink from that very privilege, think to approach Him without bearing any slight share of His Cross !

The only words of our Lord recorded during this Way of Sorrows are told us by St. Luke, the pitiful physician. There followed Him a great company of people, and of women ; and it is to the latter, bewailing and lamenting Him, that He turns and speaks. It is not enough that He should with perfectness *bear*, but even now, faint and bruised and bleeding, He takes thought for others. He teaches us, when sorrow comes to us, not to let it engross us, not to think it sufficient to try and bear our own cross, but even then to think of others, to do what we can to lighten their sorrows. And surely “we cannot but reverently adore the exceeding carefulness of our Lord even now in watching for every occasion of doing good : and the admonition we cannot but consider as intended for us all ; that when we feel our human sympathies and compassions moved towards Him at the recital of His sufferings, we are to think that He turns to us, and tells us to think of ourselves, and of our own sins, that occasioned those sufferings ; that when we venture to approach and gaze on Him, by these contemplations, we forget not ourselves also.” But blessed are they who leave their “common daily path” to mourn for Christ’s sufferings, for they will hear His Voice speaking to and teaching them.

Thursday.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

King Solomon made Himself a bed of the wood of Lebanon.—CANT. iii. 9 (marg. reading).

THE Way of Sorrows is past, the most august and mournful procession that this earth ever saw is closed, and He Who made the glory of that procession, as He is the glory of heaven and earth, is lifted up between heaven and earth, finding no resting-place amidst all that He had created, except on that Tree which should become to us the Tree of Life, planted in the midst of the Garden of His Church.

“That Tree, of which the Bride in the Canticles makes mention, ‘I said, I will go up to the Palm-tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof.’ A true Palm-tree, growing in the dry and parched deserts of this world, in a thirsty land where no water is; for the dry and sapless wood once set on Mount Calvary, has now ‘blossomed abundantly,’ and its branches are the branches of honour and immortality, meet for those that overcome, and sit down at the everlasting marriage-supper.”

It was the third hour, and they crucified Him; nine o'clock according to our time, the time of the morning

• Cant. vii. 8.

• Ps. lxi. 1.

sacrifice, when He ascended the Altar of the Cross, "spreading out His hands all the day unto a rebellious people"; "encompassing the world in His outstretched arms, and not that only, but also lifting up His hands to heaven." "He suffered without the gate, in order to shew us that we are not to expect sanctification from the sacrifices offered within that city, and that He died not for them only, but for all mankind;" He lived and suffered upon that Cross till three o'clock, the time of the evening sacrifice; He, the One only meritorious Victim, Whom all previous typical sacrifices had shewn forth, Whose all-sufficient Death His Church should for ever shew forth till He come, making the commemoration of that Sacrifice the central point of her worship, as He upon the Altar of the Cross is the centre of devotion to Angels and men; beheld in glory by one who now stood by His Cross; "in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders,—a Lamb as it had been slain", surrounded by the mystic ritual of the heaven of heavens. We cannot see Him now in that ineffable glory, but with St. John we may stand in lowliest adoration by His Cross, praying that our eyes may be purged by that sight to behold Him as our Judge, to rejoice in Him as our eternal and exceeding great Reward.

"They crucify Him:" those fewest words give to us an inexhaustible store of meditation, the penitence

* Isa. lxy. 2.

* Rev. v. 6.

and love of His saints has dwelt upon them for nearly two thousand years, and still,—

“ Fresh as when it first was shed,
Ssprings forth the Saviour’s Blood.”

“ Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” The King Who had said, “ Let the lifting up of My hands be as the evening sacrifice.” His Throne, the Cross ;—“ because also by a tree death had entered, it must needs be that by a tree it should be abolished, and that the Lord, passing unconquered through the pains of a tree, should subdue the pleasures which flow from a tree.”

“ We still gather round the bed of that beloved King. He is not there now, for He has awaked up after its painful rest.” But to us the Cross of the sufferer is the chair of the Master, as we try to remember something of what He suffered for us on that hard couch, to “ remember all the words of love He spoke ;” “ His marvellous works that He hath done, His wonders and the judgments of His mouth,” while thus dying thereon.

For He thought it little to be made man, He must also be rejected of men ; little to be rejected, He must be dishonoured too ; little to be dishonoured, He must be put to death too ; but even this must be too little, it must be by the death of the Cross. We think perhaps at most of what that Death has purchased for us ; let me at least to-day dwell on what it cost

• Ps. ii. 6.

• Ibid. cxli. 2.

• Ps. cv. 5.

that divine Love, that contrition may be awakened in my heart, that I may hate those sins which nailed Thee there. For how fearful, how unspeakably great must sin be, when He Who was to make atonement for it, He Who was to put away all death, chose the extremest and worst kind of death? All His whole Body hanging upon that Cross, breathes love to us, and calls for our love, and hatred of that which caused the wrathful displeasure of God to go over Him. His Head is bent down, His Arms stretched forth, His Bosom opened to us. O Priest and Victim, the one High-Priest, the one Sacrifice, there is no whole part in Thy Body, all Thy Bones are out of joint, the wrathful displeasure of God against sin has gone over Thee. The sins of each one of us,—mine—were amongst those which weighed Thee down—Thee, Son of God, being in the Form of God,—Son of Mary, taking upon Thee the Form of a servant. When we give way to evil thoughts, we imagine evil against Him, Who, having power to take up His Life, and power to lay it down, willed to lay it down to save us. When we speak evil words, swords are in our lips to slay Him^b. When we do evil actions, we reward evil for good against Him, and hatred for His love^c. What could He have done more than He has done?

“For it is said to us at this time, ‘Behold His Bed, which is Solomon’s^d.’ Behold Him arrayed in purple

^b Ps. lix. 7.^c Ibid. cix. 5.^d Cant. iii. 7.

on His Cross for us, no longer the mocking purple of the soldiers, but the victorious purple of His own Blood.

“Who, but the true Solomon, the God of all Wisdom, could have devised for Himself such a resting-place, in the last hours of His mortal life? Who but He could have invented so hidden a counsel by death to destroy death, by laying down life to restore to us everlasting life? Who but the true Solomon, the Prince of Peace, could have made peace between God and man, and that by the agony and shame of this very bed?”

Friday.

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY KNOW NOT
WHAT THEY DO.

*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto
my paths.*—Ps. cxix. 105.

THEY who listen to Thy words know more and more that “Thy lips drop as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under Thy tongue, and Thy speech is comely.” “What will be Thy words in the country, if Thou speakest on this sort in the way?” But how can we rightly hearken to, think, speak, meditate of Thy words during those awful hours, when, out of the strong, stronger in death than in life, came forth sweetness? For now the Lamb is “stretched on the most holy altar of the cross, burning in His own fire of love, His arms wide open to embrace every afflicted heart, His eyes fixed on heaven, opening the gates of Paradise hitherto barred by the sin of Adam. And as our Lord is the High-Priest, by Whom we are reconciled and have access to the Eternal Father, and is also the sacrifice most acceptable to God, for the sake of which He forgives the sins of the whole world; He, the Lord, seeing Himself on the altar of the Cross, made the sacrifice of Himself and offered up Himself for the whole human race, with all His will and in the fulness of His love, with an infinite desire for the salvation of all sinners. There He completed the

• Cant. iv. 3, 11.

reconciliation of sinners with God. There He embraced and united to Himself both heaven and earth, and made of both one Church, one household, and one fellowship."

And as He was then Priest, the One great Priest and Bishop, so with His sacrifice He offers incense, the incense of His holiest prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He had now brought His gift to the altar, and though He did not and could not seek to be reconciled to His brethren, since no fault had been found in Him, yet He seeks reconciliation for them with His Father. He, the only Teacher, Whose life was greater than His words, ceases not, in mortal agony to teach us, to give us the most perfect pattern of how we should keep His great precept. He had taught us to ask for forgiveness in His own words, and to believe that so asking we shall be forgiven; one only condition He annexed to that forgiveness, that we should forgive others; and now in the act of offering up the sacrifice from which forgiveness and all other benefits should flow to us, He teaches in act what He had taught in words; gives us an example, that we should do as He has done to us. We think it much, for the most part, if, after our anger at any offence is past, we forgive. But His first words after they had pierced His hands and His feet, were of love for His torturers. While we are feeling keenly the pain of any offence we exaggerate its extent, and imagine unkindness which does not exist. He finds an excuse to plead

on behalf of those who with every aggravation of cruelty were shedding the blood of the just. "He saw some that were His among many aliens; for those He even then asked pardon, from whom He was then still receiving wrong. For He regarded not that He was dying by their hands, but only that He was dying for them. Much was forgiven them, much done by them and for them, to the intent that no man may despair of the forgiveness of his sin, seeing they obtained pardon who killed Christ. Christ died *for us*, but was He put to death *by us*? But those men saw Christ dying by their wickedness, yet believed in Christ forgiving their wickedness. Until they drank the blood they had shed, they despaired of their own salvation." He prays not for them only, but for all, for me. "Our sins nailed Christ our Lord to the Cross, loaded Him with pains and torments, and offended His eternal Father; but because they have blinded and condemned us, He hath more compassion upon us than upon Himself, and without taking thought for Himself, He prayeth that we may be pardoned as blind and ignorant." "O Love, thou hast thy fullest triumph in this Divine Lamb, doest in Him whatsoever thou wilt." Thou Who art love, shew the glory of Thy power by changing even such a cold, unloving heart as mine, drawing it unto Thee, and teaching it to love others, Thy brethren. Let me not be excluded, since Thou, lifted up, wilt draw all unto Thee.

† St. Augustine.

Saturday.

TO-DAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME IN PARADISE.

And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight and took the doors of the gate of the city.—JUDGES xvi. 2.

DEATH is close to the Lord of Life, for He would taste death for every man. We cannot doubt that He Whose lovingkindness and mercy follow us all the days of our life, would have said more to satisfy the cravings of love to know something of those who have left us, had it been possible for us to apprehend such knowledge. But the few, fewest words of Holy Scripture as to the departed, the all-but utter ignorance in which we are left, seems to shew us that such knowledge is either impossible to us, or would harm us. We must bear the bitter penance of that desire for knowledge which led to sin, and must endure the agony of ignorance concerning those who have been as our own soul. But He Who was now drawing nigh to the mystery of death, Who made us what we are, and knows our yearnings, gives us from His Cross as much comfort, (may we not believe it?) as we can receive here. For His answer to the prayer of a departing soul is the assurance "thou shalt be with Me." Where the soul of Christ made brief abode, there should be the soul of the penitent thief.

There may we trust the souls of our beloved, knowing that wheresoever He was, in life or in death, there it is good for them and for us to be. It is true that the absolute promise of that blessedness was only made to one, the firstfruit of His Passion, but may we not hope that all who, like him, come to Christ in penitence and faith, have part in his blessedness, since we know at least that they rest? And "in Paradise." Round the bitter Cross breathe gales from our lost Eden, which the Second Adam is about to re-conquer for us, turning aside the fiery sword. "Going down into the dark realm of shadows, and returning from it as a conqueror, having burst like another Samson, the gates of the city of the grave which shut Him in." Only let us consider a little what manner of spirit it was which found such acceptance with Christ, and pray Him to give us the same. As it is the greatest instance of mercy which is recorded, so there is no sublimer instance of faith, hope, charity, humility, penitence, entire conversion of the heart. Faith, which acknowledges the thorn-crowned Crucified as King, as God, as having power over hell and over death, power to save to the uttermost those that should come to Him. Hope, that even he with all his sins would not be cast away. Love, mourning over his Lord's sufferings, and seeking to convert his fellow-sufferer. Humility, acknowledging that torture and death is but the due reward of his deeds. Penitence, shewn by his acceptance of the punishment of his iniquity.

“As the first to enter Paradise with Christ, he is perhaps set forth as an example of that temper which is required of all who would enter there. For that man has most attained unto evangelical righteousness who is the most thoroughly penitent, the most truly humbled; and all Christian good works lead to this humiliation. For he that hungers most shall be most filled; he that is most abased, shall be most exalted. Here was ‘the poor in spirit,’ the first to enter into the kingdom; here was one that knocked, to whom the door was opened; here did our Lord afford from the depth of His own anguish, consolation to all dying persons, who shall die in Him and in His faith; here did He afford them most blessed assurance respecting that intermediate state of the good, that whatever it is, it is to be with Him in Paradise.”

O King of Glory, Lord of Paradise, True Friend and Shepherd of my soul, in me Thou hast another thief, one whom Thou mightest most justly condemn. I confess that Thou art the King of Paradise, and that Thou canst give it to whom Thou wilt, and that Thou wilt not refuse it to any one who turns to Thee:—

“Dread Preacher, Who to fathers old
Didst wonders in the gloom unfold;
Thy perfect creed O may we learn
In Eden, waiting Thy return.

They saw Thy day, and heard Thy voice,
And in Thy glory did rejoice;
And Thou didst break their prison bars,
And lead them high above the stars.”

To Him we must thankfully trust the souls that have left us, desiring for them, in the words of an ancient Liturgy, and "all who having finished their course in this life, and having been set free from the sea of their iniquities, have approached to Thee, our Father and Brother, according to the flesh in this life, rest in that spiritual and mighty bosom—the spirit of joy in the habitations of light and happiness, in the tabernacles of shade and quiet, in the treasures of blessedness, whence every sorrow is exiled afar; where the souls of the pious without any labour await the firstfruits of life, and the spirits of just men in like manner look forward to the end of the promised reward—to that region where the labourers and the weary look towards paradise, and they that are invited long for the wedding-feast of the celestial bridegroom; where they that are called to the banquet wait till they may ascend thither, and ardently desire to receive that new garment of glory; where every distress is banished, and where joys are found."

SIXTH WEEK IN LENT.

Monday before Easter.

WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON! BEHOLD THY MOTHER!

And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.—GEN. xxii. 2.

“Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother;” for the hour had come of which Simeon spake, when her holy Child should be set for a sign that should be spoken against, of which He had spoken, “‘Mine hour is not yet come’;” saying, as it were, ‘thou gavest not birth to that part of Me which works a miracle; thou gavest not birth to My Divine nature, but forasmuch as thou didst give birth to My weakness, I will recognise thee when that same weakness shall hang upon the Cross.’ This, then, was the hour, at that time not yet come, the hour in which it would be right for Him, being at the point to die, to acknowledge her of whom He was in mortal manner born.” At the time of His first miracle, “He that created Mary was making Himself known by power, but now

▪ St. John ii. 4.

that to which Mary had given birth was hanging on the Cross."

Blessed among all generations, that not only did she bear Him, but, when His hour came, was found at the foot of the Cross. Yet what depths of anguish are contained in those words, "Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother." She, the highly-favoured one, who had found such ineffable favour with God,—Virgin-Mother, daughter of her Son,—she who had borne and nourished Him, stands by to see Him, Bone of her bone, and Flesh of her flesh, endure such anguish as none ever bore before. And He suffers the added pain of seeing her anguish. Holy Scripture is silent as to the thirty years during which He abode "in meek duty," by her side at Nazareth; all the unspeakable wonder and veiled glory of that home are hidden from us; but we know at least that He Who came to set us a perfect example, and Who was Himself the author of filial love, must have so perfectly fulfilled every slightest duty and prompting of that love, as to make her mother-love the most perfect which this world has ever seen. If mother's love will bear with so much of thanklessness and unlovingness in children, what must have been Mary's love for the "Son that never did amiss," for the wondrous Child Whom she knew to be Son of the Highest, the Holy Thing Which had been born of her, and Who was subject unto her? Yet now she stands by His Cross. It seems as if in this world the greater the love, the greater must be

the suffering; she who sang the Magnificat, who carried in her arms to His Temple the glory of His people Israel, must endure that the sword should pierce her bosom. We cannot doubt that as in her early joy she said, "Be it unto me according to Thy word," so now in this hour of torture her heart was "one with His Almighty Will, changed by the o'er-shadowing Dove," that "looking not on the death of the Hostage, but on the salvation of the world," she willingly gave up Him Who had been given to her.

On Mount Moriah of old the holocaust of two human wills had been offered to God; for "three dim days of doubt and fear" had Abraham's heart been wrung, and yet had submitted itself to God; but it was reserved for a Mother, his blessed daughter, to do so not only in anticipation, but in consummation of anguish. On Mount Calvary again parent and Child unite in offering their wills to the Divine Will.

What shall be her exceeding great reward for ever, we know not; but even by the Cross she has her reward; at this supreme hour she is the "sole earthly care" of her Divine Son; "already suffering as man, with man's affection He commended her of whom He was made Man," the Master of the Saints giving an example of tender filial love and duty, "when, not as God for the servant whom He had created and was ruling, but as Man for the Mother of whom He was born and whom He was leaving, He provided another to be, in some sort, a son to her in His stead."

Of what great account in God's sight must filial duty be, when He, accomplishing the most tremendous act in heaven or earth, wrestling against the sharpness of death,—bruising the serpent's head,—opening the kingdom of Heaven to all believers, yet takes thought for the guardianship and care of His Mother.

He, the Perfect Son, never could feel the bitter pangs of recalling past undutifulness, nor did He endure the anguish of losing her; her love watched by His death-bed as by His cradle, yet He can sympathize with such heart-rending grief since He underwent the greater torture of beholding, without relieving, her anguish at His pains. She who is nearest and dearest to Christ must have the nearest part in His Passion, must be content, like Him, to know that one prayer could summon to His aid legions of angels, and yet that He must suffer.

Three women stand by His Cross, "the weaker sex then appearing the manlier." We are told of such love and constancy in only one man, and he receives the dearest legacy from Christ. May we not think that women may learn an especial lesson from the part which the Blessed Mother and her companions took in the Passion of our Lord? He still suffers in His members, not only in individuals, but in His Church as a whole, in that Church against which the gates of hell are ever striving to prevail, trying to crucify her as they crucified her Lord. The history of the Church is often the history of a long Passion,

purest and triumphant most when suffering most ; and it seems as if the part of women in this Passion ought to be mostly like that of the women by the Cross, —suffering, watching, silence, prayer ; not careless of the troubles of the Church, rather feeling them the most keenly ; not seeking relief by desiring to be separated from those troubles, content to *do* nothing, but to suffer and pray much ; content even to see the deep sorrow and suffering of those dearest to them, “for His Body’s sake, which is the Church,” and to be able to do nothing to help or relieve them, to have nothing to give except love and prayer.

Tuesday before Easter.

MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME ?

And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day.—
AMOS viii. 9.

FROM the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. "Creation could not bear the outrage offered to the Creator; whence the sun withdrew his beams that he might not look upon the crime of these impious men." Moses had once stretched out his hands towards heaven and brought darkness upon the Egyptians, while it was light in the dwellings of Israel; now Christ, the Light which should lighten every man, stretches out His hands upon the cross in vain to His own, and "they are deprived of all light as a sign of the darkness that should come, and that should envelope the whole people of the Jews, deprived of the light of God the Father, the splendour of Christ, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit."

We feel that we can but adore in silence during these three hours of darkness, for they have nearly passed away before the voice of the Beloved is heard again. And then it is to utter words so mysterious and awful that we scarcely dare to meditate upon them or to speak of them. Not to Him is the saying

fulfilled, "The Lord comfort him when he lieth sick upon his bed, make Thou all his bed in his sickness^b;" "but rather in the midst of His unknown sufferings, He cries out, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me.'" We, mere men, cannot know anything of what that cry meant, only we know that "the faith of the Church imbued with Apostolic teaching does not sever Christ that He should be considered as Son of God and not as Son of Man. The complaint of His being deserted is the weakness of the dying man; the promise of Paradise is the kingdom of the living God." Perhaps in this cry He mourned for His own people, "Why hast Thou given Me over exhausted to such sufferings? that the people honoured by Thee may receive the things that they have dared against Me, and should be deprived of the light of Thy countenance." Human nature was forsaken of God because of its sins; and "the Son of God becoming our advocate, laments the misery of those whose guilt He took upon Him, therein shewing how they who sin ought to mourn, when He Who never sinned did thus mourn."

He still teaches us, in His uttermost desolation. He calls Himself forsaken of God, yet does not forsake God. As when in the garden, being in an agony, He prayed *more* earnestly; so now in this mysterious dreadful hour, in agony of spirit and body, He turns to His Father. He teaches us in whatever mental trials to turn *to* God, not *from* Him; to complain

^b Ps. xli. 3.

to God, not to complain of Him. "It is a subject of inexpressible support and consolation, under the weight of the heaviest calamities we can endure; inasmuch as they are not only in themselves exceeding light in comparison, but we have this strong living evidence, that depression of mind and spiritual desertion are no proof of the rejection of God; but rather, like bodily sufferings, form part of that resemblance to His Son, which renders us on that account the more acceptable to our Heavenly Father." If we stand with His faithful ones by His Cross, fixing the eye of faith on that Form fairer than the children of men, yet so marred more than any man, we shall daily learn to draw sweetness and strength from every glance, from every remembrance of His words. We shall feel more vividly year by year—each Lent—that "all these agonies, all these victories, were borne and were gained by One that is mine, by One to Whom I have given myself; but also by One Who has given Himself to me. The bitterness was His, that the everlasting sweetness might be mine: the sickness unto death was His, that the healing might be mine: the weariness and miseries His, that the comfort and refreshment might be mine." And therefore, what depth of love can be sufficient to meet such love? What surrender of every deed, word, thought, fancy, wish, hope, is it not "very meet, right and my bounden duty" to make for Him Who for me bore the desolation of His forsaken humanity?

Wednesday before Easter.**I THIRST.**

And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem.—
2 SAM. xxiii. 15.

THE four last words of our Lord must have been spoken at very short intervals, for we are told that the first of them, His cry of desolation, was "about the ninth hour,"—the hour of His death. After that cry, that awful appeal, that mysterious utterance of the Son to the Father, He,—close to the consummation, close to His rest,—returns as it were for a moment to earth, and, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled," speaks this word, His last to man, "I thirst." He said it, St. John tells us, knowing that all things were now accomplished; still to the very end fulfilling the words, "Lo! I come: I delight to do Thy will, O My God^c." All the things concerning Himself, in His mortal life, spoken by Moses and the Prophets, had been fulfilled, except only this, the vinegar to soothe His dying thirst. St. Luke records the soldiers coming to Him and offering Him vinegar, as though they were frequently doing it in mockery through the hours of

^c Ps. xl. 7, 8.

the Cross; St. Matthew and St. Mark tell us of the sponge filled with vinegar, and put on a reed, and given to Him when they supposed that He called for Elias; and St. John, of the sponge from the vessel full of vinegar put upon hyssop, and received by Him.

It seems as though all these accounts may either make mention of one occurrence, or of two, or three. The reed may have been the stalk of the hyssop mentioned by St. John, or the hyssop may have been bound on the reed. "We know thus far, that that herb was prescribed to be used in the Law; it was commanded to be made use of in sacrifices with scarlet wool, and considered as purifying. A bunch of hyssop was dipped in the blood of the Paschal Lamb," and with it were the lintels and posts marked with the sacrificial blood. "He was Man apparent, Who was God latent; He was suffering all these things as He was apparent, and the Same was disposing all these things as He was latent." He said, "I thirst;" as much as to say, "This ye have left undone, give what ye are. For the Jews themselves were the vinegar, in their degeneracy from the wine of the Patriarchs and Prophets, and as it were from a full vessel, filled full of the iniquity of this world."

Shall we, too, give Him vinegar to drink? When David, wearied with strife, longed for the water of his native Bethlehem, there were not wanting three mighty men to break through the host of the Philistines, and go into jeopardy of their lives to satisfy

his longing ; but to David's Son, in His great battle, "when He was thirsty, they gave vinegar to drink." It is spoken of in the Psalms as an additional unkindness. "He indeed bestows upon us the new wine of His blood; we give Him in return a vessel full of vinegar, sourness of heart, and bad affection." Shall we be guilty concerning our Brother, beholding the anguish of His soul, when He besought us, and we would not hear? We cannot but take the very last words spoken to man before His death by our Lord as full of meaning and teaching for each one of us. He knew "that all things were now accomplished, all done and suffered which He had come into the world to fulfil, and, having done all, His last words to us are, 'I thirst.'"

May we say with reverence that He thirsted for some return for this mighty outlay of love; thirsted for our love, obedience, for our salvation; thirsted to see man restored in Him to all which He had lost in the first Adam; thirsted to see of the travail of His soul, and to be satisfied?

"If it is lawful for us so far to press into the mystery of the Passion, of all those griefs which then weighed down our Lord, that surely must have been the hardest and bitterest of all, His fore-knowledge of the obstinacy of those that would not, as He saw by His certain vision, flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them. This is a part of the Catholic Faith, that Christ died, really and truly, by no figure

of speech, for all men ; and yet, in the act of dying, He saw that for them it would be useless. Job's complaint must have been His : 'Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye, my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me. Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?' Not satisfied with the death I bear for you, as for all ; but resolved that for you, as not for all, that death should be in vain."

We desire on the whole to make some return to His love ; we should be shocked to think that His desire towards us should remain unsatisfied, that we should reject Him ; but do we, do I, each day try to do something to satisfy the thirst of Jesus for my love ; do I remember how each day tells on eternity ; how each day, by some temptation overcome, some word unspoken or spoken, some act of duty and love, we may give a cup of cold water to Him Who thirsts for it, drawn from that well of water springing up into everlasting life which He Himself has given us, and which springs the fresher and purer the more we draw from it ?

The thirst of death ! Thou didst bear it, O most patient Master, through all those hours of torture, without complaint, without asking for relief. As once in life Thou saidst, "Give Me to drink," that Thou mightest lead a soul to repentance, so in death Thy meat and Thy drink is to do Thy Father's Will. Thou didst thirst upon the Cross to lead us beside the

waters of comfort during our pilgrimage, to bring us at last to the "pure river of water of life proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb^d;" to that river, "the streams whereof make glad the city of God^e."

^d Rev. xxii. 1.

^e Ps. xlii. 4.

Maundy Thursday.

IT IS FINISHED.

His lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.

CANT. v. 13.

“WHAT is myrrh but the bitterness of the Passion, which He endured for us men and for our salvation on Mount Calvary? those priceless drops of Blood which then flowed down on the Cross? that precious ointment on the head of our true Aaron, which ran down His whole Body as He hung on the Tree?”

“Around those lips, where power and mercy hung,
The dews of death have clung;”

the dew wrung from Him by uttermost torture, which should make the wilderness like the garden of the Lord; myrrh, “full of bitterness in its purchase, full of comfort and healing in our fruition of it,” purifying our corruption, healing our wounds. His lips drop as the honeycomb, for out of the strong came forth sweetness, sweetness in the bitterness of death.

“He doth all things calmly and with power.” Now, “because nothing remained that yet ere He died behoved to be done,” He said, It is finished. “His humanity having now endured the utmost that it was able, and His love having now attained to the

fulfilment of all it had desired; the Divine Love being thus satisfied with the blessings, which, in that Humanity, It had procured for man and for Heaven; and the Human Nature being also satisfied with the fidelity with which It had observed all that had been required of It, and with being made the means of the renovation of Its own nature, the Lord, as one who at last sees the time to be come for gathering the first-fruits of His labours, exclaimed, 'It is finished.'

They who watched by His Cross must have heard those words with almost a thrill of joy, as many a watcher since has rejoiced in the midst of sorrow when the death-struggle was past. We can mostly do something to relieve, can hold the dying head; but His Mother must stand by His death-bed, and hear the complaint of His forsaken spirit, of His deadly thirst, without being able to succour. But now at last come words of balm, bitter indeed to those who must see Him die, yet "sweet smelling myrrh," not only to them, but to His Church for ever. He had drunk to the dregs the bitter cup which we had mingled for Him; the prophecies were finished; the work which God had given Him to do was finished; His heavenly example and doctrine were finished; His sufferings were finished; the propitiation for the sins of mankind were finished.

To those who, like His earthly friends, watch by Him through this week, these words come with infinite rest and soothing. All which we have been

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contemplating is finished: one moment more, and the last enemy shall be overcome; He can suffer no more for us; henceforth, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied^f." And for us, His work here on earth "is finished." Still must He, having "broken the gates of brass, and smitten the bars of iron in sunder^g," be raised again for our justification; ascend, leading captivity captive, to receive gifts for us, "wearing our nature still that He may be able to sympathise;" having once assumed it "because Divinity could not have been nailed to the Cross, retaining it still that humanity may see itself exalted to the throne." Still before that throne He manifests Himself a Lamb as it had been slain, shewing forth His death in Heaven as His Church does on earth, speaking sometimes in visions unto His saints, and saying, "I am He That liveth and was dead^h." But all that He could do for us on earth "is finished;" He, delivered for our offences, has paid their full penalty. We may come to Him as we are, utterly vile and laden with sins, for His warfare for us is accomplished, and the iniquity of His people pardoned. He has left nothing of His redeeming work for us to finish, but in the greatness of His strength, mighty to save, has trodden the wine-press alone. And He, Who came not only to be a sacrifice for sin, but also an ensample of godly life, has given such grace to those forgiven and accepted in Him, that they too

^f Isa. liii. 11.^g Ps. cvii. 16.^h Rev. i. 18.

have been able to say, "I have finished my course," "I have fought a good fight¹." What strength can Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, impart, when His servants, rejoicing in His strength, can speak such words? All is of Him; shewing "the closeness of the relation between the Head and the members; and what He, our King and Lord doth, they do, because He Who did it for them, doth it in them. What they do, they do by the virtue of His might, treading in His steps, walking where He has made the way plain, and by His Spirit."

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 7.

Good Friday.

FATHER, INTO THY HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT.

In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

GEN. ii. 17.

JESUS must bear the doom of death, that as in Adam all die, in Him all might be made alive. Yet "when now nought of suffering remains to be endured, death still lingers, knowing that it has nothing there. The ancient foe suspected somewhat unusual. This Man, first and only, he found having no sin, free from guilt, owing nothing to the laws of his jurisdiction. But leagued with Jewish madness, Death comes again to the assault, and desperately invades the Life-giver." Jesus dies—for us, for me. Having power to lay down His life, He lays it down for us. He cried with a loud voice, "that it might be shewn that the act is done by power." "Who so sleeps when he will, as Jesus died when He would? who so lays aside his clothing when he will, as He put off the flesh when He would? What must we hope or fear to find His power when He judgeth, if it was seen to be so great when He died!" "He did not, when He had expired, bow His Head, as happens with us, but when He had bent His head, then He expired." He willed to die, because "He would have it known how great God's love to man, Who desired rather to be loved

than feared," and "that He might abolish with yet more justice the sentence of death which He had with justice passed. For as the first man had by guilt incurred death through God's sentence, and handed down the same to his posterity, the Second Man, Who knew no sin, came from heaven that death might be condemned, which, when commissioned to seize the guilty, had presumed to touch the Author of sinlessness."

Jesus does not forget us in His last words; "for He commends to His Father through Himself all mankind quickened in Him; for we are His members;" teaching us "that the souls of the saints are not henceforth shut up in hell as before, but are with God, Christ being made the beginning of this change."

To-day it is hard to think of ourselves at all, to think even of what His death has purchased upon us, to do anything but fix our eyes on that Crucified Form, "set up for an ensign that we, when we are beginning to wax faint, may look at It and be refreshed; that we, when the Amalekites are too strong for us, may turn our eyes to It, and find the words fulfilled, 'they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength:' that we, when bitten by the poisonous serpent of sin, may fix our glance upon it and be healed." But we know that though He tasted death for every man, yet we too must die; and it is here that we shall gain strength and comfort for that hour

—whether for ourselves—or comfort now in the thought of those who have passed through it. The sting of death is sin: but to-day we behold evidently set forth among us, the Lamb of God, That taketh away the sins of the world. And “death, the greatest danger in one sense—is it not the greatest privilege in another?” He that is dead is free from sin. Who would not die to be delivered from the original corruption which clings to us in the body, to know that we can never again offend God, never grieve Him or those whom He loves? Yet the doom *was* laid on us as a chastisement, that last arrow *is* “the sharpest of the Almighty’s store;” but if we, fearing to tread so rough a road, faint at the prospect, our help is here, by His Cross. “It is as if He said, ‘I Myself, O poor wandering one, I Myself know the roughness of the road by which you must pass. Steep it is, but it leads to no lower a height than the mountain of the Lord’s House; rough it is, but it ends in that sea of gold, as it were transparent glass: a thousand briars beset it on every side, but I took of their thorns, and wove them into a crown; dangerous it is, but it ends in that way where there shall be no lion, neither shall any ravenous beast come up thereupon. Take courage, therefore, O My elect one, I went before thee, but I go with thee too.’” Shall not my soul answer Him and say, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with

me, Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me. Thou art He
That livest and wast dead, That art alive for evermore,
and That hast the keys of hell and of death."

" Soul of the Lord so freely breathed,
And to the Father's hands bequeathed,
Draw us with hearts' desire to Thee
When we among the dead are free.

" Our souls and bodies, Lord, receive
To Thine own blessed Easter Eve :
All our beloved in mercy keep,
As one by one they fall asleep."

Easter-Eve.—Morning.**THE PIERCED SIDE.**

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept.—GEN. ii. 21.

HE slept, because it was not good for him to be alone, and that out of his opened side might be formed one to dwell with him in the Eden of delights, one whose company should be to him the most delightful thing in that Eden.

Now the Second Adam, having gone forth to His work and His labour until the evening, sleeps, that He may espouse to Himself a Bride, in whose beauty He might have pleasure,—a Bride, upon whom He deigns to bestow His own Name; as it is written, “In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness ^k.”

The piercing of our Lord’s side is only related by St. John, the disciple of love, the Evangelist of sacramental mysteries,—he who afterwards beheld in vision “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband¹.” But his words shew us how great he counted the mystery which he wrote of: “He that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he

^k Jer. xxxiii. 16.

¹ Rev. xxi. 2.

saith true, that ye might believe^m.” “As if to say, I did not hear it from others, but saw it with mine own eyes. And His record is true, he adds, not as if he had mentioned something so wonderful that his account would be suspected, but to stop the mouths of heretics, and in contemplation of the deep value of those mysteries which he announces.”

So in his Epistle he speaks of our Lord as “He That came by water and bloodⁿ,” and of the “three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood^o :” as also his Gospel is especially the gospel of sacramental teaching, and full of allusions to the Sacraments, (his very words being incorporated into the English Office for Holy Communion,) although he does not relate the actual circumstance of our Lord’s Baptism, or of the Institution of the Eucharist.

All through this awful week we turn most naturally to the words of elder saints to express our thoughts, fearing lest perhaps we should say anything irreverent or wrong. And if the lifeless form of those they have loved will cause reverence and awe in the most careless, what must we feel while watching by the lifeless Body of One,—

“True God, true Flesh of Mary made,
In a true grave for sinners laid;”

and while meditating on the mysteries accomplished in Him after His Spirit had departed? We shrink from using our own words; it is St. Augustine who says

^m St. John xix. 35. ⁿ 1 St. John v. 6. ^o Ibid. v. 8.

“that His Side was opened, that therein might, as it were, be thrown wide the door of life, from which the Sacraments of the Church have flowed out, without which there is no entering in unto life which is true life. That blood was shed for the remission of sins ; that water tempers the cup of salvation ; this gives both laver and drink. In fore-announcement of this it was, that Noe was bidden to make a door in the side of the ark, by which should enter thereinto the living creatures that should not perish in the Flood, by which creatures the Church was prefigured. With regard to this it was, that the first woman was made out of the side of the man as he slept, and was called *Life*, and *Mother of all living*. Significant she was, truly, of a great good before the evil of her transgression. Here the Second Adam with bowed head slept upon the Cross, that thence might be formed for Him a wife, even that which flowed forth from His Side as He slept. O death, by which the dead come to life again ! What cleaner than this blood ! What than this wound more healing ^p !” And St. Chrysostom, “Not without a purpose, or by chance, did those points come forth, but because by means of these two together the Church consisteth. And the initiated know it, being by water indeed regenerate, and nourished by the Blood and the Flesh. Hence the Mysteries take their beginning ; that when thou approachest to that awful Cup, thou mayest so approach, as drinking from the very Side ^q.”

^p Hom. cxx. Oxf. Trans., p. 1047.

^q Ib. lxxxv., p. 762.

O if Jesus,—surrounded by the adoration of the angelic hierarchy, “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,”—desired with great desire to win to Himself a Bride from redeemed humanity,—without blemish, glorious, not having spot or wrinkle,—a Bride to whom He says, Thou art all fair, My love,—beholding her “perfect through the comeliness which He has put upon her” —what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness—we, members of His Bride, and of the Body which for us was pierced ! “Set me as a seal upon Thine heart, as a seal upon Thine arm.” “A cruel engraving, indeed, though exercised on a lifeless body ; but O, how many trembling souls have since taken refuge in that wound !—have not, like Thomas, desired to thrust their hand into it for the satisfying of their faith, but have hid themselves in it, till the indignation poured out on a wicked world were overpast ! How many doves have sheltered themselves in this secret place of the cleft rock ! How many thirsting multitudes have drunk of the water that issued therefrom and lived !”

• Ezek. xvi. 14.

• Cant. viii. 6.

Easter-Eve.—Night.

Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him, in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.—CANT. iii. 11.

WE may have heard the voice of the Church in these words at the beginning of Lent; and now, indeed, we have beheld Him, the King of Peace, in royal apparel, crowned, and reigning. In royal apparel, but it is the purple robe of His Blood; crowned, but with thorns; reigning, from the Cross; in the day of His espousals, to a Bride only won in death; in the day of the gladness of His heart,—for He had accomplished His warfare,—yet a day of trouble, of rebuke, and of blasphemy. But we may not dwell on the sorrow without thinking of the joy; our hearts turn to joy and brightness as naturally as flowers to sunshine, for our souls yearn after their first happy estate, and cannot forget that the garden of Paradise was our first home. God made us for gladness, for happiness, and if the new Head of our race must needs be a Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, He has, by bearing our griefs, restored joy to us; “joy in sadness,” it may be, here, joy greater than that of Eden; pleasures for evermore at God’s right hand where He has ascended, the First Fruits of our race. So we are

told that "joy" is one of the fruits of the Spirit, Who came to renew the face of the earth : and so when she is about to shew forth her Lord's death, the holy Church throughout all the world says to her children, *Sursum corda*. Think not only of the anguish, but of the reward ; not only of the shame, but of the glory ; not only of the Cross, but of the crown. Lift up your hearts, with angels and archangels, and all the company of Heaven, to Him Who, with the Holy Ghost, is for ever most high in the glory of God the Father. Render high praise and gratulation, since whatever may remain for us to suffer, His Victory is won, His Sufferings are past, and He is gone to prepare a place for us.

When the Queen of the East had seen all the glory and wisdom of Solomon, "the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, his cup-bearers also, and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her †." May we not say, in the words of a holy man, "We, too, shall see the wisdom of our Solomon there, for we cannot understand it now : the marvellous manner in which He has guarded us through so many dangers, and guided us in so many difficulties, and made all things—even the most adverse—work together for our good, until He has set us before Himself. We shall see the 'house that He

† 2 Chron. ix. 3, 4.

has built,'—that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens : that house, too, of living stones, which, with such patience, He fashioned in this world to be His spiritual dwelling in the next. We shall see the meat of His table, where we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; for the Lamb, Which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed us, and lead us unto living fountains of waters. We shall see the 'sitting of His servants,'—the depth of their peace ; when they shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid : when, as the Solomon of old spake, there shall be neither adversary nor evil occurrent. We shall see 'the attendance of His ministers,'—how they go on their errands, how they rest not day nor night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty. We shall see 'their apparel,'—that fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of Saints, those crowns of gold they wear on their heads, those harps of gold which they hold in their hands. We shall see 'His cup-bearers,'—those who stand nearest to the everlasting throne ; His Virgin-Mother, the Cherubim that are perfect in knowledge, the Seraphim that are on fire with love. Those seven things—the types in the palace of the earthly Solomon—the Queen of Sheba saw, but when she came to the eighth,— 'his ascent by which he went up to the house of the Lord,'—then there was no more spirit in her. And so of us. When we come to the eighth thing, which speaks of the New Creation as accomplished, to the

octave which fills up the measure of that perfect harmony, the ascent by which we fully, and for ever, ourselves, enter into the very Holy of Holies,—when that Head which, for us, bowed down upon the Cross, shall then, in the Beatific Vision, kiss us with the kisses of His Mouth,—then, indeed, there will be no more spirit in us. Every power of love will be filled. Then shall Rachel leave her father's house and its labour for the true land of Canaan; then Mary Magdalene shall be called in her own name by the lips of her own dear Lord; then shall Esther go in to the true Ahasuerus, shall see his golden sceptre held out to her, shall touch it, and shall live for ever."

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, God grant I once may see
 Thy endless joys, and of the same partaker aye to be.
 Thy houses are of ivory, thy windows crystal clear,
 Thy tiles are made of beaten gold :—Oh, God, that I were there!
 Then shall my sorrows have an end, when I thy joys shall see :
 O my sweet home, Jerusalem, would God I were in thee!"

ERRATA.

P. 44, line 7 from bottom, *for* repentance *read* suffering.
 — line 9 from bottom, *for* feelings *read* failures.

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